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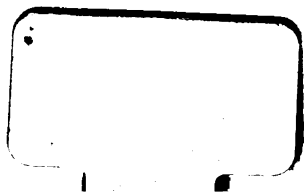
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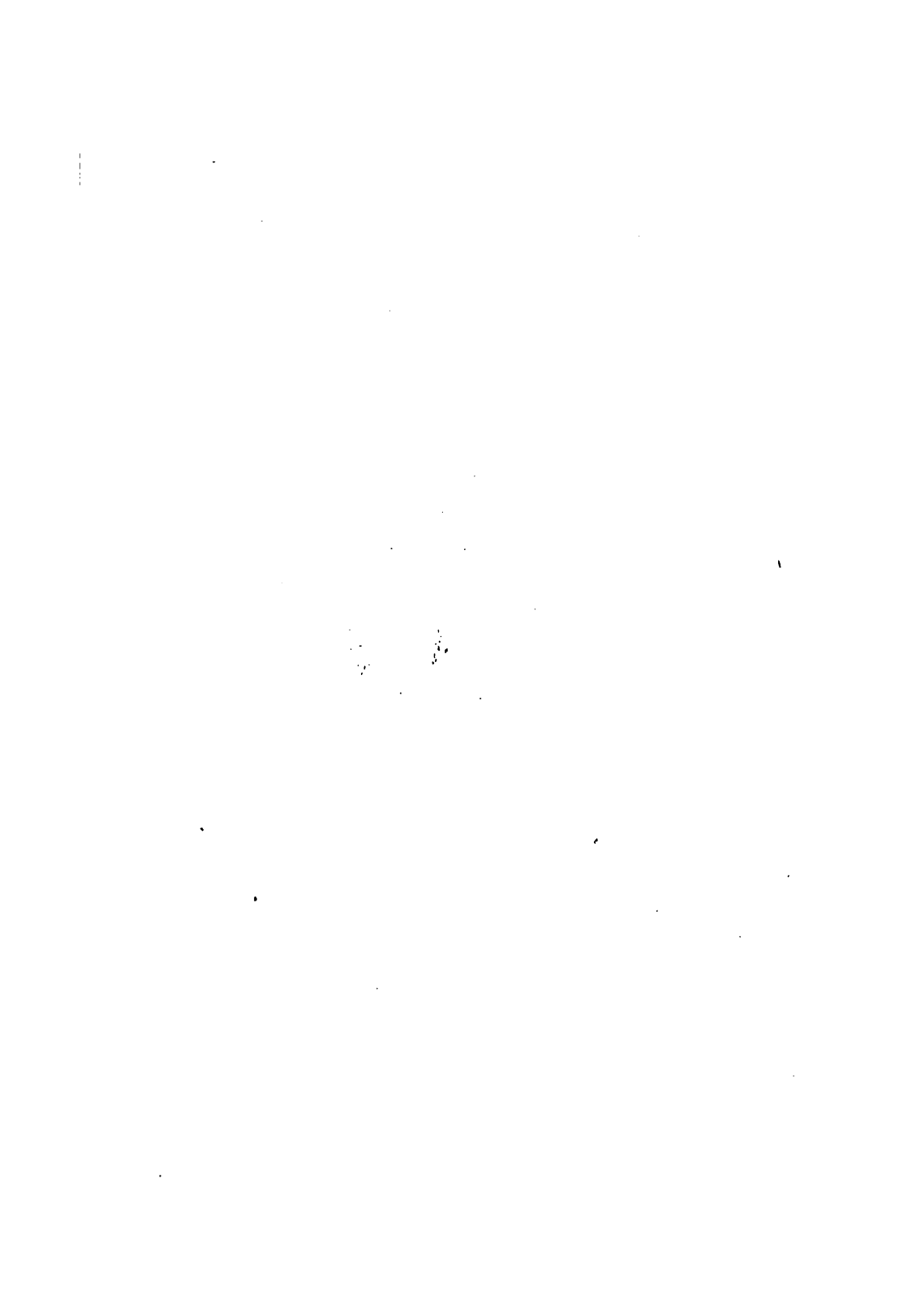
JOSEPHINE
BUTLER

EDUCATION IN THE FUTURE

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JOSEPHINE BUTLER



JOSEPHINE GREY

Frontispiece

ÆTAT 22

FROM A DRAWING BY W. B. RICHMOND

JOSEPHINE BUTLER
AND HER WORK FOR SOCIAL PURITY

BY
L. HAY-COOPER
//

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.
NEW YORK AND TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN CO.
1922

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TO

S. B.

Te sine nil altum mens inchoat

1921

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS is in no sense a Life of Josephine Butler. She laid a charge on her family and friends that no biography should ever be attempted, and her wish must be regarded as sacred. All the facts given are gathered from her public utterances and writings, and the fascinating task of tracing in detail the growth and ripening of a unique character has in great part had to be abandoned. The book, owing to its small size, can give only the merest outline of the principles for which Mrs. Butler struggled for so many long years.

Acknowledgments are due to Messrs. Arrowsmith for their kind permission to quote from *Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir*, and to Messrs. Horace Marshall for a similar kindness with regard to Mrs. Butler's *Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*; to Dr. H. Wilson for very generous help in reading the MS.; to Miss E. M. Barton and other friends for their invaluable help in various ways.

L. H.-C.

March 1921,

PLAYDEN, SUSSEX.

PREFACE

THE Great War, with its convulsions, has forced the facts of widespread promiscuity and sex irresponsibility, with their attendant evils, into broad daylight, and an agitated public has clamoured for stringent police action and legislation. To thousands the situation has appeared new, and in need of new and drastic remedies. Few have realised that there is nothing new except the volume and publicity of the evil ; few that many of the remedies proposed, though apparently new, are in fundamental unity with old and discredited methods¹; and fewer still that nothing new can be added to the principles laid hold of by Mrs. Butler in the last century, which should govern the attitude of law and society towards the social evil and its consequences. Not Flexner himself, the most modern authority, has anything new *in principle* to add to her work.² Like Emilio

¹ See Appendices I and II.

² Appendix VII.

Castelar, of whom she wrote, she was one of "Los Hombres de Manana"—the men of tomorrow; a seer, a prophet, an interpreter of genius to her own and every age. "She produced a change in the thoughts of men on the subject with which she dealt," said Professor James Stuart, "so that it can never be viewed again without taking into account the principles she laid down." They are the heritage of all nations and all time.

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JOSEPHINE GREY, ÆTAT. 22 . . . *Frontispiece*

JOSEPHINE BUTLER *Facing page 112*

ERRATUM

Frontispiece — *for* "W. B. Richmond" *read* "George
Richmond."

JOSEPHINE BUTLER

CHAPTER I

PERSONALITY

IN the hand of the Master Craftsman, we may believe, any tool, however poor, can be turned to perfect uses, but Josephine Butler was an instrument consummately fashioned for the service of humanity. Every circumstance of her life and personality fitted her to meet her singular and heroic destiny. She embodied in herself—"by a gift of God," to use the phrase always on her lips—everything she strove for. Her lot was to face in all its squalid and often disgusting detail the utter ruin and wreckage of ideals in the law of the land, the relations of men and women, and in the home, while, as if to give her a spiritual counterpoise, she was herself "the happiest of women in all the relations of life." Against that thing of tragic import—the broken home—she could always set memories of a free and

happy childhood and a perfect marriage ; against the hells of State-organised prostitution, their supreme antithesis, a noble family life. Her enemies pretended to see in her activities the recoil of a woman unhappily married. Nothing could be more pitifully untrue. She was steeled to see and hear, in her own words, " the smoke of the pit, the violence of the torture inflicted by man upon his fellows, the cries of lost spirits, and the laughter of demons," by all that was lovely, calm, and true in her own intimate experience.

" The Greys were a loving family," she says, a big family of six girls and three boys, living a free outdoor life, in one of the most beautiful parts of Northumberland. No spot on earth seemed to them like Glendale. For many generations the Greys had been rooted there, and the romance of the Border ran in their blood. It was a place where the sound of streams could be heard all day and all night, with high grasslands to gallop over, soft, rich valleys, and wild woods in which one could be hidden in a moment.

From Josephine Grey's birth at Dilston in 1828, her feet " were set in a large room." Great causes and great names echoed among

the household words of her earliest years. She drank deeply of the spirit of her father, John Grey of Dilston, the Northumbrian agriculturist and reformer; caught from him the glow of patriotism, and in the period of the First Reform Act, and the Anti-Slavery Agitation, was kindled to a burning sense of the inalienable rights and liberties of every living creature. "My father was a man with a deeply rooted, fiery hatred of all injustice. . . . Probably I have inherited from him that passion. . . . When my father spoke to us, his children, of the great wrong of slavery, I have felt his powerful frame tremble, and his voice would break." John Grey's axiom was: "You cannot treat men and women exactly as you do pound notes, to be used or rejected as you think proper"¹; and his saying sums up the principle for which Josephine Butler gave all she had to give in after years. Her mother's parents were descended from Huguenots, driven from France at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

"Like most very great people, she was naturally cosmopolitan," says Professor

¹ *John Grey of Dilston*, by Josephine Butler.

Stuart, an intimate friend and fellow-worker ; and another friend, Miss Forsaith, puts it even more strongly : " A passionate lover of her own country, she loved all lands and all peoples." She received her first training as a citizen of the world within her own home, where the doors were always open to visitors of all nationalities, on missions of agricultural or other interest. She was thus early equipped for her international labours.

People who remember her still speak of her " romantic beauty," and the early portraits show a figure with the slender grace of the Greys, and a face like the face of some visitant from the spirit-world—a very symbol of purity. The unflinching eyes, filled with a deep compassion, look out steadfastly from under level brows, and the lovely moulding of the face responds to the strong intellectual beauty of the head. The contrast between the spiritual serenity of the upper part of the face, and the sensitive lips, with their infinite capacity for pain, became more marked as the years went on. The eyes, in later life, had " the haggard beauty of the woman who had suffered and thought for others," writes a friend. They were always the eyes of the pure in heart.

No one who ever heard her forgot her voice ; it had some extraordinary quality, so that, as M. Henri Minod said, " her first accents seemed to enfold the unhappy and degraded with an infinite tenderness, and to an incomparable degree she possessed the mysterious power of persuading, touching, and convincing."

Her faults were the faults of all fiery natures. As she says of herself : " To speak honestly, I was too impetuous, impulsive, and sometimes rash. A keen sense of injustice was apt to fill me with bitterness of soul." She was often rebellious, often despairing, often impatient, and this sense of her own imperfections drew her naturally towards calm, steady, equable people, who, like her husband and certain friends, knew how to deal gently with the bitterness and petulance of a soul in trouble.

Miss Forsaith says : " She had a rare and lovely humility ; she was the humblest in heart of all the persons I ever met. Applause saddened and vexed her. ' Love is a thousand times more precious than honour,' she wrote in a letter to me. No one ever loved the outcast more ; no one ever knew Mrs. Butler

until they had known her in trouble ; those who knew her thus became hers for life ; they would have served her to the death. Yet her pity and tenderness were not for the outcast alone—it burned and still burns for all ; it was the secret of her remarkable influence over individuals.”

Yet she had it in her to be implacable where principle was involved. In her book of private records for 1870, just after she had begun her work against the Contagious Diseases Acts, these significant lines appear : “ What have I to do with peace any more ? It is now war to the knife. In a battle of flesh and blood, mercy may intervene and life may be spared ; but principles know not the name of mercy. . . . We declare on whose side we fight ; we make no compromise.” To the end of life she acted on these words in every matter of principle.

“ Bravery and the alertness of battle, and the power of self-sacrifice, and the indignation against wrong which characterised her, came to her,” says Professor Stuart, “ partly by descent. She was at home in every class of society . . . and of a very gracious presence, and the impression made by first seeing her

and hearing her voice, I expect, has been forgotten by none who ever met her. She was of a very artistic temperament—a good painter, an extremely good musician . . . a bold rider, and active, though always of a somewhat weak health. . . . She was very full of humour, and, while deeply in earnest, had the faculty at times of being charmingly gay. She dressed with quiet taste and simplicity.”¹

A friend writes: “ There was always a little touch of romance, of artistry, about her appearance. I remember it in her extreme age, and I have heard people describe her appearance on the platform in the great days. Perhaps ‘ distinction ’ is the modern word. Once, at Edinburgh, she was all in white ; it must have been like that when someone who had heard about her, but not seen her, said, ‘ They say on the platform she is like an angel of light.’ ”

Another friend says : “ Her sense of humour kept her heart young. ‘ You must not mind if I say odd things sometimes,’ she said to me. ‘ Howard Webb once wrote, “ Humour is born of intense sympathy.” So it is. Often it has been granted to me to win a poor outcast by a

¹ Obituary Notice, *Shield*, January 1907.

little harmless joke.' . . . Then would come tears, for we had something in common." In private talk she was full of variety. Her beautiful face would light up with laughter and gaiety ; then some swift change of thought would bring about a tremendous gravity, to be succeeded by a dreamy look, as if her thoughts had carried her far away.

" And now," says Professor Stuart, " what is the sum of it all ? It seems to me to be this : that we must all be glad because she lived. We are each of us individually better, and the world as a whole is better, because she lived ; and the seed that she has sown can never die."

CHAPTER II

FAMILY LIFE

MRS. BUTLER'S public life, as a great and intrepid leader of men, owed much of its strength and sanity, as she repeatedly acknowledged, to the ideal conditions of her marriage and family life. Her union with George Butler (son of Dr. Butler, who was Head Master of Harrow in the early years of last century, and Dean of Peterborough) was one of love and freedom on both sides. They met during his tutorship at the University of Durham in 1848-50, and were married in 1852. For five years he was an Examiner in the schools at Oxford. In 1857 he became Vice-Principal of Cheltenham College; in 1865 Principal of Liverpool College. Eventually he was made a Canon of Winchester. His deeply rooted faith and serenity met and calmed her stormy nature, and her intellectual and moral periods of despair. She says: "He was all the better a comforter to me because he did not, perhaps could not, easily enter

into and follow all the windings of my confused thinkings and doubtings and revolted feelings. . . . He kept my feet from falling and mine eyes from tears." Their identity of spirit, amidst all their differences of character, is shown in a lively passage in a letter to her mother, on his Ordination in 1853: "George and I are so accustomed to do everything together, that I thought I should feel like Edith, when she crept secretly to the church and looked on while her own Harold was married to another. But I did not feel so. I quite identified myself with my Harold. I felt as if I were being ordained too."¹ Froude, his intimate friend, described George Butler as one of the most variously gifted men he ever saw, in mind or body; he was a scholar, an athlete, a sportsman, a linguist, and an artist. Yet, as Lord Coleridge wrote of him, "He was more remarkable in himself than anything he ever did or wrote." She delighted in his gifts, and her own versatility gave her a share in many of his interests. Together, in their early married life, they copied the Turner drawings in the Taylor Gallery at Oxford; collated the black-letter

¹ *Recollections of George Butler*, by Josephine Butler.

Chaucer in the Bodleian ; studied the translations of Dante in several languages ; they rode together ; together shared a love of dogs so great that Mrs. Butler devotes several pages to it in her *Memoirs*. Their love of their children, and the part they played in the warm, rich life of the home, is shown by many tender references, but above all by their crushing grief over the loss of their little Eva. There is a touching description of how she comforted her husband in his despair at this time. Of her relations with her boys, Miss Emily Ford writes : " Mrs. Butler and her young sons once stayed at the island home of the Marshalls on Derwentwater at the same time that we did. I shall never forget the vision of her after dinner sitting on a sofa with her sons close by her, with their arms round her, and one on the floor, talking together in low voices with little bursts of happy laughter, more like a girl with her lovers than a mother with her sons."

Although his professional duties kept him from playing an active part in his wife's campaign against Regulation, Mr. Butler lost no opportunity of associating himself with her in it, and had the same conviction of a

Divine Call as herself. Even when she was facing furious mobs, he could comfort her by saying : " I knew no harm could come to you so long as you were engaged on this mission." They were at one in their attitude towards every phase of the position of women, and in a deep sense of the moral equality of the sexes before God. She proudly says, "*He never needed convincing.*" The saddest of trials to them both, and one which he bore without a murmur, was the inevitable separations entailed by her work. " It has been an indescribable blessing and strength to have been surrounded all along by tenderly loyal adherents and supporters in the persons of my own family and of those dearest to me. . . . My husband's character and his position in the world are known. My sons . . . always gave me loving sympathy and practical help. My five sisters . . . were always and strongly in sympathy with it." So wrote Mrs. Butler in her *Reminiscences*, and she often said how strange it seemed to her, that she, who was surrounded by good men all her life, "should have been compelled to say such hard things of men."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Butler came from large

families, with liberal traditions, and a wide circle of friends; socially, politically, and intellectually, they were in touch with all the foremost people of the day in England, and on the Continent. Mr. Butler, or, as he became later, Canon Butler, was in constant communication with both Universities, and with foreign savants, and their house became the resort, as years went on, of visitors from many nations. Their travels with their sons in Europe were a feature of their lives, for which they saved their money, and to which they looked forward as a necessary relief from the sordid ugliness of Liverpool at that period.

All this variety of interests and emotions generously taken and given, this stability of her inmost life, this sure ground for her faiths and affections, played their part in making Josephine Butler what the world knew her, in the end, to be. When she died she had attained her heart's desire: she had revealed to the world "God's one, His constant attitude" towards the relations between the sexes. That she achieved this was in great part due to the inspirations caught within the walls of her own home. "*I could not* have done it without."

CHAPTER III

YEARS OF PREPARATION

"ALL vital evolutions in human history," says Mrs. Butler, "reveal two truths. The first is that *someone must suffer* before a living movement is born ; and the second that if it is to mould the future of the race, it must be *preceded by prayer*." The years between 1852 and 1869 of Mrs. Butler's life at Oxford, Cheltenham, and Liverpool exemplified this ; they were years of bitter travail of soul, gathered up into one great cry, "Through day and night, through summer and winter . . . that the Lord would reveal to me His one, His constant attitude towards His . . . world."¹ Her own wifehood and motherhood, her own intense personal happiness and contentment wrought upon her, and enabled

¹ Mrs. Butler's reiterated references to "God's one, His constant purpose," may thus be explained. She believed that if human beings find themselves in a dilemma between a great evil and a remedy which is a violation of the moral law—since God is a moral God—their task is, not to consent to violate the moral law, but to *find another remedy*. It exists. The progress of the human race depends upon the energy and fearlessness with which it is sought.

her to visualise the abysses of the social evil, wherein she saw, ever more poignantly, the souls and bodies of women, cut off from motherhood, disinherited from wifeness, wrecked, enslaved, and set apart for eternal loss. All the fiery strength of her being revolted against the theory that between her and them was a gulf fixed ; every instinct was in arms at the death-like silence prescribed by the world—" that permanent endorsement of injustice " and of an unequal standard of morality—under cover of which men escaped scot-free, with no accusing conscience, while " these evils bore with a murderous cruelty upon women." She says, " I had no dialectics at command . . . I resolved to speak little with men and much with God." It was a long period of preparation.

Another formative influence was the American Civil War. Mr. and Mrs. Butler, in their impassioned sympathy with the North and the slaves, found themselves isolated, and in the minority. " It was good training," remarks Mrs. Butler, " in standing firm and letting the tide go by. . . . It was our lot in the future again . . . to have to accept and endure this position."

The cup of her life was slowly filling, but before her world-wide motherhood came into its fullest activity she and her husband passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. In 1864 their only little daughter was killed by an accident before their eyes. Her words "*Someone must suffer*" applied to herself with tragic force. With all the infinitely more unhappy mothers doomed to lose their daughters under the operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts she was now united. "I now knew I could say, 'I understand; I too have suffered!'" That Something Great which steadily shaped her course now sent her out "to find some pain keener than my own." In 1866, at Liverpool, she plunged into the heart of human misery, in the Bridewell, in the hospitals, and on the quays. Her visits "drew down upon my head an avalanche of grateful womanhood." The Butlers took many poor girls and women into their own home—often as many as five at a time. The domestic difficulties of this arrangement were overcome by her housekeeper, who adored Mrs. Butler and helped her work in every possible way. Later, with the help of friends, a House of Rest was opened for incurable

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women, and an Industrial Home for the healthy and active who wished to make a fresh start in life. It is interesting, as an instance of Mrs. Butler's modern spirit, to read: "Besides the usual laundry and other work, we set up a little envelope factory; this called out some skill and nicety, and interested the girls very much."¹

Mrs. Butler was a born suffragist. The enfranchisement of women from every form of slavery—moral, legal, industrial—continually preoccupied her thoughts: "As I grew up, I became quite melancholy at what seemed to me perpetual injustice crushing down woman. You have no idea how bitter this made me as a girl. Then came my marriage . . . and this softened my bitterness." She saw that the franchise was the only satisfactory pledge that the interests of women should be respected; but "do not . . . for a moment suppose that I am attributing to men any *intentional* injustice." Some of her sayings became household words to suffragists, as: "Life cannot be lived at second-

¹ Cf. Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe*, p. 100: "The girl who possesses some form of industrial skill is least likely to err and most likely to recover herself."

hand"; and: "Think of the pain and trouble and martyrdom we might be saved, if we had that little bit of justice." Her influence permeated the Women's Movement, although she never became a Suffragist leader. The mainspring of her work was the conviction that the sexes rise or fall together, the true interests of both men and women being, in the deepest sense, identical. "It is the beneficent arrangement of God," she wrote. She never regarded the repeal of the C. D. Acts as any more a woman's question than a man's, and staked everything on the faith that "*the ordinances of God are one.*"

Miss Clough, one of the pioneers of women's education, calling on the Butlers in Liverpool in 1867, found an active sympathy for the "beautiful schemes which were even then taking shape in her fruitful brain." "I think she was heartily glad," says Mrs. Butler, "to find herself in a house where not a shadow of a doubt or prejudice existed." Mrs. Butler gave herself wholeheartedly to the work of women's education, and whenever that happened her leadership was a foregone conclusion. "There was always a deep silence when she spoke at a meeting," says an old

friend, "and in a room you never wanted to listen to or look at anyone else." Miss Clough records the charm and enthusiasm which attracted many supporters to the women's cause. From 1867 to 1873 Mrs. Butler was President of the North of England Council for the Higher Education of Women, a body which did invaluable work in opening doors hitherto bolted and barred ; obtained examinations and lectures for women, and laid the foundations of Newnham, the Pioneer Women's College. She both wrote and spoke untiringly. It is interesting to note that she was a believer in the co-education of boys and girls. Mrs. Butler also used all her influence to bring about the passing of the Married Women's Property Act.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS

IN 1864 the Secretary to the Admiralty introduced the Contagious Diseases Bill, which was passed without comment, and extended in 1866-8-9. Mr. Benjamin Scott, Chamberlain of the City of London, said : " It happened that the public were in a state of alarm at the ravages of disease among cattle, and Parliament had passed various Acts under the title of ' Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act.'¹ Few people outside Parliament did not suppose it was another Animals Act."

By 1880 these Acts had been either adopted or enforced in Canada, Cape Colony, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand, Fiji, Labuan, the Straits Settlements, Ceylon, British India, Gibraltar, Malta, St. Helena, Jamaica, Trinidad, and fourteen military districts in Great Britain. Their purpose was to give soldiers and sailors security from disease incurred through promiscuous intercourse.

¹ *A State Iniquity.*

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Flexner says (*Prostitution in Europe*, 1917 ed., p. 359): "A verdict unfavourable to Regulation has been found . . . not because it violates personal liberty, but because it fails; because it is at heart useless in respect to order, and worse than useless in respect to venereal disease." It is not likely to be revived in England, but some knowledge of Regulation is necessary in order to understand the work of Josephine Butler, and a clear conception of its principles is of value in understanding the many modern suggestions for a direct campaign against venereal disease. Many of these suggestions are in fundamental unity with Regulation.¹

The Acts were based on the assumption that continence is impossible to men, and prostitution a necessity, and that therefore, owing to the diseases incident to prostitution, a sanitary cordon should be drawn round prostitutes. For this purpose a Morals Police was created, whose duty it was to hunt up suspected women, and induce them to attend fortnightly medical examinations for disease. In order, presumably, to get over the difficulty that such examination, without consent,

¹ See Appendix IX.

would fall into the category of indecent assault, the police had to obtain from each woman a "voluntary submission," declaring herself willing, as a "common prostitute," to present herself periodically for a year for this purpose. On signing this "submission," her name was entered on the Register of Prostitutes.

("I believe," said Mr. Ryder, J.P. for Devonport, before the Royal Commission of 1871,¹ "that almost every woman brought before the justices has complained that she signed the submission without being aware of what she was doing." The House Surgeon, Royal Albert Hospital, Devonport, said: "I think the greater number were induced to sign by pressure.")

If a woman refused, intimidation was practised, and on her continued refusal the policeman could, and invariably did, lay information on oath before a magistrate that he had "good cause to believe her to be a 'common prostitute.'"

A summons was then served, and the woman had to appear in Court, which was generally packed with riff-raff when such a case came

¹ *A State Iniquity*, Chap. V.

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on. The magistrate could either accept the policeman's opinion, or form his own. No other evidence was required, regardless of the principle in English Common Law that the best evidence the nature of the case admits of shall always be required. It was, as Flexner says of police control in Europe to-day: "His word—the policeman's—against the girl . . . whether she should be pushed into the abyss." Obviously, the Acts would have been unpopular if men—who constituted the "best evidence"—had lived in constant danger of having to witness to immoral relations with women.

There was no definition of the words "common prostitute" to help the magistrate or to protect the woman. As Mrs. Butler remarked, "This is at heart in part due to the fact that no definition is possible which does not include men as well as women."¹ Lack of definition made redress practically impossible, for how could a woman obtain redress when the definition of her offence existed nowhere but in the minds of the persons condemning her?

The fact that jury trial, with counsel for

¹ *The Constitution Violated.*

the defence and a verdict on evidence, was dispensed with forms the strongest indictment of these Acts. The tremendous question, for herself and her family, of the chastity of a woman, was dealt with as a "minor case," for summary jurisdiction, in spite of the fact that the penalties were by no means minor.

If the accused refused to sign the "voluntary submission" in court, she was liable to imprisonment for one month for the first offence of not coming up for examination, and two months for the second, with or without hard labour, without the right to appeal to Quarter Sessions.

Women who signed, and on medical examination were found to be diseased, were summarily imprisoned in certified hospitals. They thus lost their liberties, in contravention of Magna Carta, which forbids any proceeding upon the body of the accused except after trial by jury. ("But a very large percentage of women," said Mrs. Butler before the Royal Commission of 1871, "are not at all diseased when they come up for examination. They come up in health and are discharged in health. What is that for? Is it not an attestation of the State that these women are fit to have

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intercourse with men, and is not that an encouragement to men? Of course it is.")

To obtain exemption from the Register, or release from hospital, depended on the favour of a magistrate or policeman, and was an exceedingly difficult matter. Mr. Benjamin Scott gives instances of women of long-reformed character given seven and fourteen days' hard labour for failure to attend examinations. Many respectable married women and young girls were indiscriminately herded into the hospitals, the victims of malice, anonymous letters, or of a simple mistake. "Thousands of women," said Mrs. Butler, "passed yearly into a system of slavery, worse than that of the negroes . . . as it involved servitude, not to labour, but to vice."

No provision was made for the cure of diseased men, or their wives, or children.

The failure of Regulation, as a sanitary measure, is due to three principal causes: (1) The women examined and registered are never more than a small fraction of those carrying on illicit intercourse in an area, and the setting up of a system of Regulation invariably increases the number of the un-

recognised women, and so the sources of infection and probably the amount of indulgence. (2) No examination which has been devised is able to ensure even a moderate amount of safety. Infection may be conveyed by persons themselves free from disease. The most careful examination may fail to detect signs of disease in women infected. (3) The fact that by Regulation the State and public authorities recognise this traffic as inevitable, and make the safeguarding of it part of their hygienic machinery, leads to a false sense of security, and to the feeling that sex indulgence is necessary and is provided for by the State; hence individual self-control is diminished, the moral standard of the community is lowered, and the amount of irregular indulgence, therefore, is likely to be increased.¹

On the Continent of Europe, State Regulation had been in force for many years before its introduction to this country, in France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Belgium, and Italy.¹

¹ From the report of the Medical Women's Federation, December 1919. See Appendix II.

CHAPTER V

RESPECT FOR LAW AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

WHEN asked before the Royal Commission of 1871 on what grounds she objected to the Acts, Mrs. Butler replied: "On moral and religious, but also on constitutional and scientific grounds." Later, she wrote, "To me, justice and religion are one." Her veneration for high constitutional principle was perpetually reinforced by her passion for righteousness. In a fine passage in her *Reminiscences* she says: "I recall the past of our country's history, with its loyalty and love for the great constitutional principles for which patriots have suffered and died. . . . I contrast that . . . with the present loose notions concerning the worth of the individual, the sacredness of the human person and of liberty. . . . As I do so, it seems to me that I am standing by the side of a bier, *and looking on the face of a dead friend.*"¹ When, as she said, she became "a rebel for God's laws,"

¹ Chap. III.

she arose as a patriot in defence of those liberties which have made England great, and against laws contrary to Law.

As she shows in her books (*The Constitution Violated*, and *Government by Police*), it is impossible to conceive of statutes more alien to the genius of the English Constitution, or of the Common Law of England, than the C. D. Acts. True, our laws at that time contained many injustices to women, and these inequalities no doubt provided a *nidus* for the development of still profounder injustices. But it is difficult to conceive how Regulation, borrowed from countries under autocratic rule, could have been grafted on to the traditions and laws of a free people, without some understanding of the psychology of the period. It is scarcely a fair statement to say that they were conceived wholly in iniquity by men who hailed Regulation as a system offering facilities for vice.

Two factors were at work. One was, as Mr. Stansfeld said (Bristol, 1874), that "they were smuggled through Parliament. . . . The laws were passed, *sub silentio*," because the subject was unsavoury," and the conventions of that generation imposed a general silence on such a subject. The other factor was the

state of the popular mind in regard to science. The sweeping statement of P. Ramanathan, Solicitor-General of Ceylon, "*Western science is ignorant knowledge*," supplies us with the exact phrase in which to express the state of mind of the general public and of the majority of the Legislature in regard to science, when the C. D. Acts were imposed. It was a state of "ignorant knowledge." The world of thought was still rocking under the tremendous impact of the Darwinian thesis (published in 1859). Its effect, in the words of Sir. W. Huggins, was "to change the opinions of mankind in a day. . . . Like a keystone, it brought down with it an arch of connected beliefs."¹ Its reverberations left the public in a condition to accept any proposals which appeared to have the sanction of science. In seeking direction, men turned from conscience and the priest to the doctor ; in seeking wisdom, they turned to science rather than to religion or history. "The great forces which move mankind were out of touch with each other, and furnished no mutual support."² The idea of a biological

¹ Presidential address before the Royal Society, 1905.

² Paton, *Cambridge Essays on Education*.

necessity for vice acted as an anodyne to the consciences of both men and women, and ancient beliefs and principles "looked like the face of a dead friend." For these reasons many honest men, hypnotised by the words "Hygiene" and "Sanitation," supported the Acts in good faith, though undeniably the vicious were quick to see and seize their opportunity. Mrs. Butler's prayer, "that God would show her His one, His constant purpose towards His world," was in actual fact a recognition of her gigantic task in bringing the "great forces that move mankind" into touch once more.

Part of her task was to reassert the liberties of England. In *The Constitution Violated*, she defined with great clarity where and how the C. D. Acts were "unlawful laws." Her passion for justice rings like a trumpet call all through the book. She opens with Clauses 39 and 40 of Magna Charta: "No free man shall be taken or imprisoned or disseised or outlawed or banished or any ways destroyed, nor will we pass upon him, nor will we send upon him, save by lawful judgment of his peers"; and "We will sell to no man, we will not deny to any man, justice or right."

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To deal with the Acts alone as an injustice to one class¹ or one sex was not enough for her democratic vision ; the issues were vaster ; she handled the subject as a menace to the liberties of the nation as a whole. All the great interpreters of freedom and constitutional justice speak in her pages : Chatham, Coke, De Tocqueville, Creasy, Blackstone, and many another. She boldly set before the nation a solemn choice : “ Are these gentlemen to have protection for their vices, or will you retain your liberties ? *We cannot have both.*”

Mrs. Butler's respect for law was coupled with a robust sense of the need for self-government, which made her very distrustful of a tendency which is familiar to us all to-day, and which was recently described by a modern reformer in these words : “ ‘ Here is an evil,’ says the public. ‘ The law must set it right.’ Somebody suggest a law !—houp-la !—*pass it at once !*” Mrs. Butler called this tendency in her day “ the enormous excitement on all hands to be busy making laws !” She says, “ *Beware of constructive legislation on the*

¹ Mrs. Butler repeatedly testified to the fact that the operation of the Acts was confined practically to the daughters and wives of the poor.

*question of morality between the sexes,"*¹ and quotes Baron Humboldt's axiom "that the function of the law is to preserve the rights and liberties of all, and prevent one citizen from wronging another." "We are very apt to fall back on Parliament, and on the law and the police. . . . None of us like to shoulder our share of responsibility with regard to vice in the streets . . . houses of ill fame . . . and outrages on children. . . . I beseech you, do not ask for laws, but *associate yourselves*. If you make a mistake—it is not fatal—you can go back on your error, but the law is inelastic and rigid and very apt to be unjust when dealing with this question. . . . You may drive bad houses from one part of the city to another—but still there is a demand if you have not attacked this evil in the hearts of men. . . . I would sit down on the steps of the brothels, and pray the people out. I would fain act as Christ did—deal with the individual, and not the mass. You *can do this*. Beware of constructive legislation. The best of you, gentlemen, are not sufficiently educated in justice."²

¹ Mrs. Butler, and others of her time, too largely ignored the numbers of innocent victims of disease.

² See Appendix VII.

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With regard to recent proposals for making prostitution and the transmission of disease illegal, Mrs. Butler's views are interesting: "Since the beginning of our crusade, I had been convinced in my conscience and understanding of the folly, and even wickedness, of all systems of *outward repression* of private immorality, for which men and women are accountable to God and their own souls; but not to the State!" (Letter to a friend.) "Men and women can avoid that disease by voluntary self-control. I think it is a mischief to meddle with it at all. . . . As to the communication of disease between men and women, that seems to me an indecent thing to interfere with, and altogether productive of evil. . . . I would have legislation, if resorted to at all, to deal with the *causes* of vice."¹ (Evidence before Select Committee, 1882.)

In the *Stormbell*, August 1899, Mrs. Butler wrote: "Let us suppose for a moment that women were suddenly given the power to make laws for men. Might there not be a

¹ At that period there was no anticipation of the present methods of *State action by suggestion* followed by voluntary treatment.

strong inducement to compel men not to drink and gamble? And if ever righteousness of aim could justify the attempt at compulsory progress, would it not do so in the attempt to check male unchastity? But, for my part . . . I should have no faith whatever in such compulsion. . . . I thank God from my heart that we cannot be made good by external pressure . . . for the instinct that makes men spurn even benefits forced upon them. Without that instinct where should we be? Slaves where rulers were cruel; sleek fattened animals where rulers were kind. For any real reformation springing from within, *I believe the condition of freedom is indispensable.*"

CHAPTER VI

CALL TO ACTION

As early as 1863 Miss Harriet Martineau had written four letters to *The Daily News* against the system of State Regulation of Vice, and in 1867 Mr. Daniel Cooper, secretary to the London Rescue Society, came out as a resolute opponent of the Acts, appealing to clergy, philanthropists, legislators, and public men. A "stoical indifference" was the only result. Dr. Hoopell, of North Shields, Dr. Charles Bell Taylor, of Nottingham, and a few other doctors, who knew what the system was, tried to rouse the country in 1868. But, as Mrs. Butler says, their experiences proved to them that women—"the persons most insulted"—must take the matter into their own hands. Something more was obviously needed than could be contributed by men alone. In 1869 Miss Wolstenholme and Mr. Daniel Cooper, knowing that Mrs. Butler's surpassing sympathy for the outcast woman would be aflame at this legalised exploitation of her

helplessness, drew her attention to the situation. She was already aware of it. Ever since 1866, when the knowledge first broke upon her that Regulation had found a footing in England, she had been in overwhelming depression, with a "trembling presentiment," born of the mystic sense that never left her, that she too must enter this darkness. She wrote in a diary: "Like Jonah—charged by God with a commission he could not endure to contemplate—I fled from the face of the Lord. But the hand of the Lord was upon me; day and night the pressure increased. . . . This is, perhaps, the work I longed for years ago and saw coming, afar off, like a bright star. . . . But seen near, it is so dreadful, so difficult, so disgusting, that I tremble to look at it."¹ Appeals poured in upon her. So far she had not spoken a word to her husband. Her heart was shaken by the foreboding of what he would have to endure. At last she went to him, one evening when he was alone. "I hesitated, I leaned my cheek against his closed door, and as I leaned I prayed. . . . I went in and gave him something I had written, and left him." For some

¹ *Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir.*

days neither of them could approach the subject. "But by and by we spoke together about it freely." He never asked, "Is this suitable work for a woman?" "He only saw a great wrong, and a great desire to redress that wrong."¹ His words: "Go, and God be with you," consecrated her to her task.

An immense burden was lifted from her spirit when once this great decision was made. The record in her diary was: "Thank God all doubt is gone!"

With Mr. Daniel Cooper and Mr. B. Williams of the London Rescue Society, Mrs. Butler began her task by a journey through the subjected districts, in order to collect first-hand information. From this moment (1869) she lived at white heat, knowing neither politics nor opportunism, the acknowledged leader, the inspiration and rallying point of the agitation, both at home and abroad, for sixteen stormy years.

Members of the Society of Friends, and the little group of doctors in the North, formed the nucleus round which sympathisers began to gather. The National Association for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice was

¹ *Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir.*

founded on October 5, 1869. Mrs. Butler became President of "The Ladies' National Association,"¹ founded in the same year, and with the same objects.

On December 31, 1869, *The Daily News* published the famous "Women's Manifesto," signed by two thousand well-known women. It ran as follows :

"We, the undersigned, enter our solemn protest against these Acts. (1) Because, involving as they do such a momentous change in the legal safeguards hitherto enjoyed by women in common with men, they have been passed not only without the knowledge of this country, but unknown in a great measure to Parliament itself ; and we hold that neither the Representatives of the People nor the Press fulfil the duties expected of them, when they allow such legislation to take place without the fullest discussion.

"(2) Because, so far as women are concerned, they remove every guarantee of personal security which the law has established and held sacred, and put their reputa-

¹ Now "The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene," Orchard House, Great Smith Street, S.W. 1, and the British Branch of the International Abolitionist Federation. Also the Offices of *The Shield*.

tion, their freedom, and their persons absolutely in the power of the police.

“ (3) Because the law is bound, in any country professing to give civil liberty to its subjects, to define clearly the offence which it punishes.

“ (4) Because it is unjust to punish the sex who are the victims of a vice, and leave unpunished the sex who are the main cause both of the vice and its dreaded consequences ; and we consider that liability to arrest, forced medical treatment and (when this is resisted) imprisonment with hard labour, to which these Acts subject women, are punishments of the most degrading kind.

“ (5) Because by such a system the path of evil is made more easy for our sons and to the whole of the youth of England, inasmuch as a moral restraint is withdrawn the moment the State recognises, and provides convenience for, the practice of a vice which it thereby declares to be necessary and venial.

(6) “ Because these measures are cruel to the women who come under their action, violating the feelings of those whose sense of shame is not wholly lost, and further brutalising even the most abandoned.

“ (7) Because the disease which these Acts seek to remove has never been removed by any such legislation. The advocates of the system have utterly failed to show, by statistics or otherwise, that these regulations have in any case, after several years’ trial, and when applied to one sex only, diminished disease, reclaimed the fallen, or improved the general morality of the country. We have, on the contrary, the strongest evidence to show that in Paris and other continental cities, where women have long been outraged by this system, the public health and morals are worse than at home.

“ (8) Because the conditions of this disease in the first instance are moral, not physical. The moral evil, through which the disease makes its way, separates the case entirely from that of the plague, or other scourges, which have been placed under police control or sanitary care. We hold that we are bound, before rushing into experiments of legalising a revolting vice, to try to deal with the *causes* of evil, and we dare to believe, that with wiser teaching and more capable legislation, those causes would not be beyond control.”

Mrs. Butler says the Manifesto was “ like

a solitary flash of summer lightning, prophetic of the storm." A dead silence ensued, while the Regulationists gathered their forces together. Then began the "Conspiracy of Silence" in the Press, only information favourable to Regulation being published. To meet this difficulty, the *Shield* was founded as the Abolitionist paper, Mrs. Butler being a constant contributor. The supporters of Regulation, as early as 1867, had formed a propagandist association, of which the avowed object was the extension of the C. D. Acts to the whole of the civil population.

CHAPTER VII

APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE

THE Constitution of England, as Kipling says of the Navy, "is very old and very wise. Much of its wisdom is on record and available for reference, but more of it works in the unconscious blood of those who serve her." By a sure intuition, it was to this, the wisdom working in the "unconscious blood" of the nation, that Mrs. Butler turned at once—to that diffused, instinctive sense of justice which is the inheritance—born of long struggles for civil liberties—of the English people. The victims of the Acts being mostly of the working-classes, she felt certain that if once the great mass of the people understood the operation of the Acts, her case was virtually won. She seized the opportunity of addressing an audience of railwaymen, fitters, and engineers, at Crewe early in 1870, following up this meeting by a tour in the North. For a woman at that period, such a plunge into publicity on such a subject needed

courage beyond anything we can dream of to-day. The results surpassed her hopes. Vigorous Repeal societies sprang up all over the country ; meetings were held ; money, letters, and appeals poured in. A host of well-known people rallied to Mrs. Butler's support, prominent among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Bright, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Duncan McLaren, Mrs. Bright McLaren, the Mallesons, Mr. John Stuart Mill, Professor Sheldon Amos, the Rev. F. D. Maurice, Dr. Hoopell, Professor Stuart, Dr. Baxter Langley, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Wilson. Success seemed almost at hand.

But the political test soon revealed the nature of the opposition. In May, Mr. W. Fowler's attempt to introduce a Repeal Bill was defeated by a motion for the adjournment of the debate, carried by a large majority. In November 1870 a by-election occurred at Colchester, one of the districts under the Acts. The Government candidate was Sir Henry Storks, ex-Governor of Malta, an enthusiast for the Acts, who had written : " I am of opinion that very little benefit will result from the best-devised means of prevention until prostitution is accepted as a necessity,"

and who, speaking before a House of Commons Committee, had said : " Not only prostitutes, but soldiers' wives, ought to be examined." Mrs. Butler and her supporters flung themselves into the business of organising opposition. Dr. Baxter Langley generously consented to be put up as a third candidate to divide the votes. As *The Shield* reported, there was a saturnalia of rioting at Colchester, led by a band of keepers of disorderly houses. But Mrs. Butler was undaunted, and held many meetings. On one occasion she had gone to bed, very tired, when the hotel proprietor knocked on her door. He said, " I find you are Mrs. Butler, and the mob outside have found out that you are here, and have threatened to set the house on fire unless I send you out at once." She packed up and found a lodging in the house of a workman and his wife. Next day some of the older men advised her not to attempt to go to the women's meeting she had arranged. " For a moment a cowardly feeling came over me. . . . Then it suddenly came to me that now was the time to trust in God. The words of the ninety-first Psalm, ' I will say unto the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress ;

My God, in Him will I trust' came pouring into my soul as if spoken by some heavenly voice." She slipped into the hall, "only an old shawl over my head," passing safely unrecognised "through crowded lines of scoundrel faces and clenched fists. . . . It was a solemn meeting." The two Mr. Malle-sons managed the crowd admirably, making them believe she was coming out at the front, while she was got out by a low window at the back of the hall. She and Mrs. Hampson lost their way, and Mrs. Butler took refuge in a dark, unused warehouse for a time. "Presently one of the gates was pushed open, and I could see in the dim light the poorly-clad slight figure of a forlorn woman of the city. She pushed her way in and said, 'Are you the lady the mob are after?—I have heard of you and been watching you.' The kindness of this poor miserable woman cheered me. We overheard women going past in groups who had been at the meeting. 'Ah! she's right. Depend upon it, she's right.' " Eventually she reached her quarters unharmed, where all her friends were assembled, looking anxious and rather awed.¹

¹ *Personal Reminiscences.*

Sir Henry Storks was defeated by a large majority. The result was a serious blow to the Government—a Liberal one ; they had not reckoned on defeat organised by members of their own party. “ They learned,” says Mrs. Butler, “ that this was a question they could not trifle with or ignore.”

CHAPTER VIII

ROYAL COMMISSION OF 1871

THE Government was in an embarrassing position after the Colchester defeat. In order to extricate itself, it appointed, in November 1870, a Commission of Inquiry into the Operation of the C. D. Acts. This was the fourth Enquiry since 1864, and on each occasion the result was to rivet the system more firmly on the country. "It was a 'packed' jury," says Mr. B. Scott, "with a foregone conclusion," since only one member was an Abolitionist. Mrs. Butler was called in March 1871 to give evidence before the Commission, which happened to be accommodated in the premises of the House of Lords. She wrote : "It was a formidable occasion. I, the only woman present before a large and august assembly of peers, bishops, M.P.s, representatives of the naval and military services, doctors, and others ; my questioners being in a large majority hostile, and the subject serious and difficult."¹

¹ *Personal Reminiscences.*

Mrs. Butler's evidence before the Commission affords an unrivalled opportunity of gauging her spiritual and intellectual powers. Her calm, her great personal dignity, and "very gracious presence" seem to this day to shine out through the long columns of the Minutes. It is interesting, in view of her determined front, to read in her *Recollections of George Butler* these words: "Some have perhaps imagined that an unbroken consistency of action, based on an immovable strength of conviction, must at all times have characterised any man or woman destined to take part in it. A sense of justice forces me to confess that (in regard to myself) it was not always as they imagined." She spoke of herself as "the tried and wavering advocate of a cause in which faith and courage were put to a severe test"—as the disciple who looked away from Christ "upon the weltering and unstable floor on which he stood, and immediately began to sink."

Yet, in spite of these hidden feelings, and of all her beauty and charm, she proved herself a totally unsparing antagonist. It was "war to the knife," indeed; her "principles knew not the name of mercy." So formidable was

she, that when, now and then, she turned to make a spirited onslaught on some statement, the invariable result among her questioners was a prompt change of front ! Her intellectual grasp was unfailing ; no allusion found her unprepared, and what she says of her husband's " habit of speaking just so as to hit the mark, neither more nor less," applies to herself as a witness. Her repeated challenges were fearless : " Of the operation of the Acts I neither can nor will speak. . . . It is nothing to me whether they operate well or ill. Those whom I represent consider it an absurdity and a mockery that any tribunal of gentlemen should be set to inquire into a moral question like this. . . . The practical working of an Act which is vicious is no fit subject for inquiry." Invited to give her views, she said, " A restraining moral motive . . . is taken away from our male youth by the presence in the midst of us of a recognised system of harlotry. We claim that laws should not be made which teach in an indirect and subtle, but most effectual, manner that impurity of life is not a sin, but a necessity . . . whose practical effect is, so far as they are successful at all, to offer protection and

immunity to the sinner in the practice of his sin. Even a limited knowledge of human nature and history reveals to us most clearly the inevitable connection between offered protection and a general increase of licentiousness. The elevation of impure and unlawful intercourse to the dignity of a recognised traffic, under legal regulations, exercises a most baneful effect upon the community. When, through the base teaching of a base law—a law grounded on the supposed necessity of impurity—the conscience of a people becomes dimmed and darkened, the foundations of virtue are undermined, the generations to come cease to discern clearly between good and evil, self-control is abandoned and vice is increased. Neither can our moral objections to these Acts be met by assurances that a certain number of women are reclaimed under their operation. I ask, where are the *men* reclaimed by them? As mothers of sons, we demand to know what the influence of these Acts is on young men? It is vain to restore fallen women on the one hand, while on the other you stimulate the demand for these victims. Prove to us, if you can, that these Acts promote chastity among men, for that is what we are concerned about."

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On the constructive side she claimed that the evil "must be met from many sides at once": by better laws, raising the age of consent to seduction (it was then twelve years), and making both parents responsible for illegitimate children; by better housing; better education, industrial training, and openings in industry for women; but above all, she urged a higher standard of "public opinion as to the morality of men." "Nothing can be done until the vices of men are attacked and checked."

Yet, in spite of her boldness and the uncompromising character of her replies, Mr. Ryland, speaking afterwards to Mr. Duncan McLaren, said, "I am not accustomed to religious phraseology, but I cannot give you any idea of the effect produced except by saying that the influence of the Spirit of God was there. Mrs. Butler's words and manner were not what the Commission expected, and now some of them begin to take a new turn."

During the sittings of the Commission public meetings were organised by the Abolitionists all over England, at many of which Mrs. Butler was the chief speaker, arousing great enthusiasm.

CHAPTER IX

ENGLAND, 1871-1874

BETWEEN the Royal Commission of 1871 and the fall of the Gladstone Cabinet in 1874 was a stormy period, in which the Abolitionists left no stone unturned to force the Liberals to adopt Repeal as a Government measure. Slowly the tide began to rise. First, members of the Society of Friends, "whose active practical help," in Mrs. Butler's grateful words, "is always offered to suffering peoples all through the world . . . these dear people rallied to us very early." Then followed the Primitive Methodists, the Bible Christians, the United Methodists, the Wesleyans, the Baptists, the Congregationalists, and the Scottish Churches. The Church of England remained aloof, although many individuals were staunch Abolitionists. On the occasion of the Church Congress at Nottingham in 1871, Mrs. Butler tried in vain to obtain a hearing for a speech on Regulation. Mrs. Butler comments : " We had many times

heard rough and defiant cries . . . but never so deep and angry a howl as arose from the throats of . . . the Clergy of the National Church." At the annual Social Science Congress (1871) and the Trade Union Congress (1874), Abolitionist resolutions were carried. The Working Men's League for Repeal was formed. Scarcely less important were various local associations ; for instance, The Northern Counties League, which spent annually between 1873 and 1876 sums varying from £1,062 to £1,487. Mr. Henry J. Wilson and Mr. Joseph Edmondson were Hon. Sec. and Treasurer of the latter, and worked indefatigably, rousing the whole North. The Midland Counties Electoral Union was another powerful and active body.

But the political world was the storm-centre. Petitions and deputations succeeded one another. A petition from the prostitutes of Colchester in favour of the Acts caused a great sensation, and recalls the deputation of slaves to Abraham Lincoln in favour of slavery. Mr. Mundella, Mr. W. Fowler, and Mr. Jacob Bright brought forward Bills or moved the reduction of Army Estimates again and again. But the by-election was

the chief lever of the Abolitionists. Ripon, Tiverton, Preston, Richmond (Yorks) were stoutly contested. At Pontefract in 1871 Mr. Childers stood for re-election on his nomination as First Lord of the Admiralty, and Mrs. Butler, Professor Stuart, and others went down betimes to organise opposition to him. The fight soon raged entirely round the Acts, and hour after hour, in public and private, Mr. Childers was forced to face the question. (Later he became an Abolitionist.) Mrs. Butler describes a furious scene as follows : " We had to go all over the town before we could find anyone bold enough to grant us a place to meet in. At last we found a large hayloft over an empty room. We could only ascend by a ladder through a trap-door." Professor Stuart, going on in advance to see that all was in readiness, " found the floor strewn with cayenne pepper, to make it impossible for us to speak." They mopped up the floor with water, and began the meeting with prayer as usual, " when a smell of burning was perceived, smoke began to curl up through the floor. . . . Bundles of straw had been set on fire. To our horror . . . we saw head after head of men appearing with

countenances full of fury . . . they crowded the place—there was no possible exit for us. Mrs. Wilson and I stood in front of the women, side by side. She whispered, ‘Now is the time to trust in God ; do not let us fear,’ and a comforting sense of the Divine Presence came to us both. . . . Their words were hideous. . . . They shook their fists in our faces, with volleys of oaths. It was clear that they understood that ‘their craft was in danger.’ We said nothing—simply stood and endured ; it seemed all the time as if some strong angel were present, for when these men’s hands were literally upon us, they were held back by an unseen power.” A young, stalwart woman fought her way out and ran for help. Eventually, while Mr. Stuart diverted the attention of the roughs, Mrs. Butler made a dash for the trap-door, and Mrs. Wilson was soon beside her in the street. They went straight to their hotel, and held a magnificent women’s meeting.¹

The upshot was the reduction of Mr. Childers’s majority from 233 to 80 ; the London Press burst into a paroxysm of passion, Mrs. Butler being always the object of personal

¹ *Personal Reminiscences.*

insult and vile insinuation. Meanwhile, many indignation meetings against the Acts were held in the provinces, of which the provincial Press began to take notice.

The Abolitionist hopes had never been higher than during this period. In the year 1873 their activities were great, two hundred and fifty-six public meetings being held, and fifteen important conferences. The country was becoming informed, but the struggle was destined to last another ten years.

CHAPTER X

BRUCE'S BILL

THE incident of "Bruce's Bill" in 1872 sheds a clear light on Mrs. Butler's mind and principles. The Government had begun to find the incessant turmoil of the Abolitionists extremely inconvenient, and the Home Secretary, Mr. Bruce, attempting a compromise, gave notice of a Bill to repeal the C. D. Acts, while detaining diseased *women prisoners* under compulsory treatment after the lapse of their sentence. It was a bait held out to Liberal Abolitionists, who felt acutely the trouble they were forced to make for their own party. At first the effect was exactly what Mr. Bruce had hoped for. At a meeting of Abolitionists to consider the Bill, the immediate gain of repeal outweighed all else, and only five persons voted against it. Needless to remark, Mrs. Butler was among these five. As Professor Stuart wrote: "She aimed at one perfectly definite object"; her vision was concentrated with almost incredible pertinacity on a single aim, and she saw at once

that Bruce's Bill, though repealing the Acts, insinuated Regulation, not in a limited number of districts, but into every town in the country. As she said: "The Bill makes the prison the portal to the whole system." When her Parliamentary friends urged her to accept "half a loaf," she replied: "It contains rank poison. How can we accept it?" Every woman who by the existing laws could be got into prison for any trivial offence would have been liable, under Bruce's Bill, to detention and enforced violation.

The Bill eventually pleased neither party, and was withdrawn. But Mrs. Butler's views on Bruce's Bill are valuable to-day, because people who would be quite warmly opposed to Regulation frequently make proposals to detain and treat persons under official control, i.e. prisoners or paupers, who are found to have venereal disease. Mrs. Butler, in a letter to the Ladies' National Association, wrote: "Hitherto the law has been careful that the moral character of a criminal in regard to sexual matters should not in any way affect the strict justice of sentence for any specified offence. . . . It appears as though many men suppose any kind of

justice or injustice, any description of treatment most convenient . . . is good enough for women whose (social) position does not raise them above all suspicion as to moral character."

Abolitionists have always protested against the *confusion of punishment for crime with treatment for disease*. "Strict justice" demands that persons whose sentence has expired should not be kept in prison, except for some new offence, and after a new trial. The idea that diseased women should be "detained" in some institution, but not necessarily in a prison, was shown by the Abolitionists to be entirely misleading. "Compulsory detention," said Miss Lucy Wilson (Mrs. Butler's trusted friend, whose legal acumen was always at the service of the Abolitionists), "is *argot* for imprisonment."¹ There would be no objection to the detention of prisoners if *all* persons suffering from venereal diseases had to be isolated. But this is manifestly impossible. To apply deten-

¹ This idea finds its modern parallel in the Government C.L.A. Bill (re-introduced 1920) which in Clause 3 gives power to detain "common prostitutes" under eighteen in approved Homes. Such detention would be once more "*argot* for imprisonment." What is needed is the *better protection* of young persons as *opposed to penalisation*.

tion only to the defenceless of one sex because general compulsion is impossible, would be not health legislation, but class and sex legislation, and a failure morally and hygienically. The only policy both hygienically and morally sound is : No policy for any special class, but one policy for all.

The same suggestion has often been made in regard to the detention of diseased paupers. The recent Royal Commission on Venereal Disease has strongly reinforced the position consistently held by Mrs. Butler in its statement that treatment of disease " should be such that persons affected should have no hesitation in taking advantage of it." Any poverty-stricken person would hesitate to enter a lock ward or workhouse infirmary if he could be compelled to remain there indefinitely. He would keep away till he could no longer hold out, and by that time the most curable and most contagious stage of the disease is usually over. This would be against the interests of both public health and of economy.

Instead of compulsory treatment for *women only*, with prison for recalcitrant *women*, and the official protection of vice, the Report of

the Royal Commission¹ recommends free treatment for all, men and women alike, and the offering of every inducement to patients to come for early treatment; treatment centres all over the country, and increased facilities for training doctors, nurses, and students.²

Since (as Mrs. Butler wrote), "this is a disease which is the consequence only of certain acts of immorality," the Commission, in a weighty passage of its Report, calls for the raising of the moral standard: "If these diseases are to be stamped out, it will be necessary not only to provide the medical means for combating it, but to raise the moral standard and practice of the community as a whole. . . . There is urgent need for more careful training in self-control. . . Such instruction should be based on moral principles and spiritual considerations, and should by no means be concentrated on the physical consequences of immoral conduct." Mrs. Butler, "being dead, yet speaketh," in this great official pronouncement.

¹ *Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Causes of Venereal Diseases, 1913-1916.*

² Thanks to the prompt action of the Government, the main recommendations of the Royal Commission are to be carried out, and schemes are being organised by the Health Authorities all over the country.

CHAPTER XI

FOREIGN MISSION

WITH Mr. Gladstone's sudden resignation in 1874, and the Dissolution, followed by the return of the Conservatives to power, the Abolitionists' hope of Repeal as a Government measure was temporarily extinguished. The Conservatives were even more unanimously pledged to Regulation than the Liberals, and, moreover, were well aware that the gift of Repeal would rob them of the tactical advantage of the division—for conscience' sake—in the Liberal ranks. They remained in power till 1880. But, says Mrs. Butler, "looking back, we can now see the wisdom of God in allowing us to wait so long for victory. The mere legislative reform . . . was but a small part of the great and vital movement . . . if we had had a speedy triumph there would not have been that great awakening of conscience which we have witnessed, resulting in . . . lasting reforms."

The International Medical Congress at Vienna in 1873 had demanded the immediate enactment of a uniform system of Regulation

which should have the force of law in every country in the world. The opinion had been warmly applauded that: "from the moment when prostitution shall become a regular and recognised institution, admitted and regulated by the State, its perfect organisation will become possible."¹ The idea of International Regulation was not new; such proposals had been made repeatedly in Belgium, France, Italy, and Russia, and they had received reinforcement from the action of England in regard to the C. D. Acts.

Depression at home, and powerful organisation abroad, faced the Abolitionists. "A mere handful of the most steadfast, filled with a profound sense of the solemnity of the purpose which had brought them together," says Mrs. Butler, met to confer together at York in 1874. After a period of silence for united prayer, in a bold speech, the Rev. C. S. Collingwood, Rector of Southwick, Sunderland, proposed that they should carry the war into the enemy's country, and, weak as they were, attack the formidable organisation that confronted them abroad. Correspondence was soon opened with philanthropic workers on the

¹ *Dr. Schneider's Report of Vienna Congress*, p. 49.

Continent, and in December 1874 Mrs. Butler started for Paris, with her husband and sons.

The following is her account of her visit to the offices of the Morals Police: "I was struck with the grandeur of the externals of the office. . . . It has great gateways, within which are guards pacing up and down; a broad stone staircase, where guards stand. . . . I reached the top . . . and the Prefect's door, over which in large gold letters were printed the words, '*Arrestations, Service des Mœurs.*' . . . I was kept waiting . . . until the great man had dismissed certain business. At last a venerable servant, in livery covered with gold lace, directed me to follow him . . . into Lecour's audience chamber. His appointments and surroundings are more imposing than the room of any Minister of State that I have yet seen in England." A man, presumably a father, was having an interview with Lecour of a tragic nature. "I think he was pleading to get his daughter's name taken off the register of shame. That he did not succeed . . . should show to Englishmen what a tyranny for themselves, as men and fathers, this horrible system may become." Another man also had an audience, "young,

stout, and overfed-looking, and his conversation was of a friendly character. . . . It seemed to be concerning the internal economy of some of the protected houses of debauchery. . . . Lecour deprecated certain journals, which were too republican and ought not to be read by women. Lecour regulates the reading in these places." At last "the great man was ready for me. . . . By this time anger had made me bold. I stood up before him, declining to sit. . . . He said he knew very well who I was. . . . I continued all the time to look very steadily, but not rudely, at him. . . . I inwardly invoked the presence of Him who is the searcher of hearts, that He might be there." He was very talkative, which was useful, "for he surely said more than was prudent. . . . I asked if vice and disease were diminished or increased the last five years in Paris. . . . 'Oh, increased; they go always increasing, continually increasing.' . . . He attributed it to two things, i.e. the Commune, and the increasing 'coquetry' of women. . . . I then made an onslaught and said (looking up at a speck of blue sky which I saw through the window, and holding on to it, as it were) that

I—we—consider the whole system as an absurdity, because of its inequality of application; that men are immoral and liable to the physical scourge of vice as well as women, while the system only attacks women. . . . I purposely avoided religion and morality, and tried to nail him to the logical view of necessary failure through injustice and one-sidedness. Off he went again, denouncing women and their seductions. . . . I asked him if he had been so long at the Prefecture without its occurring to him that the men for whom he labours, and for whom he enslaves women, are guilty in the same sense as women. . . . This challenge, and perhaps a little irony in my tone, roused him. He then acted in a most disagreeable manner an imaginary scene between a poor woman, a temptress, and a young man . . . the woman was a deliberate, determined corrupter. ‘With what motive?’ I asked. ‘Is it not often the case that she is poor?’ ‘Oh, no, no, it was not poverty, it was simply coquetry. . . . Women continually injure honest men, but no man ever injures an honest woman.’ . . .

“ ‘Excuse me,’ I said, ‘but in your book you speak of “wives and honest girls injured

by immoral men.”’ He replied, ‘ Ah, yes ; but all that belongs to the region of romance. . . . The police cannot touch the region of romance ! ’ Then he suddenly assumed a solemn expression, and said : ‘ Madame, écoutez ! Moi, je suis religieux ; I am as religious as yourself. . . . ’ As a religious man, he must admire the punishment of vice (in women only). I said, rather sharply, ‘ That may be, sir. I did not come here to speak to you about religion, but about justice.’ To me they are one. I brought him back to the failure of his system, hygienically. He shrugged his shoulders, and said, ‘ Who hopes for great hygienic results ? ’ ‘ Those,’ I replied, ‘ belong, I suppose, to the region of romance ? ’ I thanked him for his information, and asked if he would be so good as to give me a letter which would admit me to St. Lazare (an immense prison, hospital and dépôt for all the unhappy women of Paris). He summoned a secretary, and in a commanding way directed him to write a letter giving me *carte blanche* to see everything. . . . So now I can go about under his benign protection. . . I felt very sad as I left his place.”¹

¹ *Personal Reminiscences*, Chap. IV.

CHAPTER XII

FOREIGN MISSION (*continued*)

IN Paris, that citadel of Regulation, Mrs. Butler was strongly supported by members of the Protestant community, and held meetings in private houses. M. de Pressensé, M. Theodore Monod, M. and Mme. Jules Simon, M. Jules Favre, were among those who helped and sympathised. From Paris she went to Lyons, Marseilles, and Genoa, at each place gathering adherents, men and women of real worth of character. Thence to Rome. (Cavour had introduced Regulation in Italy in 1860.) Here Mrs. Butler met "one of the most ardent apostles of our cause whom we have known in any country, Signor Giuseppe Nathan. . . . He had been known before to his countrymen as a friend of Mazzini, and had suffered for his principles. He succeeded in rousing the working-people throughout the length and breadth of Italy against Regulation, engaging the best men and women in the work, and the hearts of all to our

cause.”¹ In Rome Mrs. Butler paid a visit to the Minister of Justice and Police, Vigliani. “The reception Vigliani gave me was cold and chilling. . . . He seemed immensely amused at the idea of abolishing legal prostitution; spoke of the enslaved as *not human* at all, and of the errors of men as something to be regretted, but inevitable, and to be taken into account, i.e. provided for. He said: ‘A woman who has once lost chastity has lost every good quality. She has from that moment *all the vices*.’ ”² From Rome Mr. and Mrs. Butler travelled to Naples and spent some time with her sister, Mme. Meuricoffre, whose tender sympathy and deep understanding were a constant source of consolation and strength. On their return journey the Butlers visited Florence and Milan, where Signor Nathan had organised a big conference, including ex-Deputies and well-known doctors. A resolution in favour of Abolition was passed. They went on to Turin, and thence to Geneva, where everything looked very ominous for her first meeting. At one time the anxiety was almost more than she could bear, and she

¹ *Personal Reminiscences.*

² *Ibid.*

felt the responsibility all the greater as her husband had been obliged to return to his duties at Liverpool College. "My heart was burdened with all the shameful things I had heard concerning the slave system in Geneva, the buying and selling of young girls, and the corruption of young men, students, school-boys, and whole families." A supporter had asked that the legal aspect should be dealt with, and Professor Hornung, who held the Chair of Jurisprudence in the city, took the presidency. In spite of her anxiety, "towards the end . . . behold, there were no objectors, but one after another stood up and gave his adhesion to our cause."¹ At Neuchâtel Mrs. Butler first made the acquaintance of M. and Mme. Aimé Humbert, soon to ripen into personal friendship²; Chaux de Fonds, the largest industrial town of the Jura, came next, then Berne and Lausanne, and Paris once more. During this second Paris visit Mrs. Butler had rather painful experiences, arising from the opposition and cynicism she met with. But she had roused many

¹ *Personal Reminiscences.*

² M. and Mme. Humbert's daughter, then too young, later became Mrs. Butler's trusted friend and private secretary.

hearts, and the close of the year 1876 in France was marked by a heated correspondence in the French Press on the subject of the Police des Mœurs, exposing many dark things to the light of day.

Immediately after Mrs. Butler's return to England, the British¹ and Continental Federation for the Abolition of Government Regulation of Prostitution was formed, which now has branches in almost every European country. The movement was no longer a national one. Mrs. Butler, commenting on this, says, "Many were asking, 'What energising and purifying wind has been blowing through Europe?' They had forgotten that seeds have wings, and that they could silently distance the garden fence and fly afar." ²

In 1876 Mrs. Butler again visited Switzerland, as a delegate to a conference held in preparation for the great International Congress at Geneva in 1877. On this occasion she spoke, at twenty-four hours' notice, to a mass meeting of working men and women at Geneva, which impressed her deeply. She

¹ The British Branch is at Orchard House, Great Smith Street, S.W.1. The Federation is now known as the International Abolitionist Federation.

² *Stormbell*, February 1890.

speaks of a "sea of faces" and of a fervent response, only interrupted by one incident: "an attempt to utter coarse words of opposition and insult" by a man who turned out to be the keeper of a disorderly house.

Mrs. Butler travelled home by the Rhine, in order to include Germany in her mission. She visited Frankfort, Cologne, and Elberfeld, and was much encouraged by the kindly support she received. From Germany she visited Belgium, staying at Liége and Brussels, where "I made my first acquaintance with the awful crimes and cruelties resulting from the system of regulation long established there," and brought to light later, through the courageous action of members of the City of London Committee for Repeal.¹ She made many friends for the cause in every country.

¹ See Chap. XIII, p. 90.

CHAPTER XIII

ENGLAND, 1876-1880

MRS. BUTLER'S mission to the Continent was of twofold value to the cause of Abolition in England :

(1) It freed the movement from the imputation of "English Puritanism," and revealed it as one of those *struggles for a principle*, before which all differences of race, creed, or sex must vanish. During the temporary eclipse of the hopes of English Abolitionists, the Continental struggle, like all international work, brought a sense of proportion into local victories or defeats ; it meant much, to those toiling in England, to know that to hold fast here would support the fighters there.

(2) Another advantage is expressed in a letter from Mrs. Butler to M. Humbert in 1875: " We want statistics and facts—yes ; but would English statistics and facts alone, drawn from a limited experience, be much or generally valued in other countries ? Facts

from a larger area we must have later, and we shall have them; for, thank God! they stand as indestructible witnesses everywhere of the folly and futility of the attempt to regulate vice. How much more powerful, how overwhelming in fact, would it be for our opponents . . . if we should show facts and statistics gathered from every country and over a larger period of time. That is precisely what we are now aiming at. We have received all the most recent reports from France, Italy, Germany, and other countries. On every hand there is confession of the failure of Regulation. Mireur, Jeannell, Diday, Deprès, Pallasciano, Huet, Crocq, all confess to hygienic failure. The proposals of some of these men to ensure future success (a success they confess they have never yet ensured) are of such a wild and ghastly nature that one has only to read their books to see that the beginning of the end is at hand. . . . You see that in a year or two we shall have a mass of evidence against this system which will give the doctors and materialistic legislators a hard task to refute. . . . We shall come down on our opponents with the heavy artillery of facts and statistics and scientific

arguments on every side.”¹ In a single phrase, the Continental work of Mrs. Butler enabled British Abolitionists to “study large maps.”

In spite of hope deferred, the six years from 1874-1880 (when the Liberals again came into power) were fruitful years. Great names began to appear in the movement. Mr. Stansfeld, Member for Halifax, with a long and distinguished career behind him, had only waited till the Dissolution should free him from the restraints of office to appear as a champion of Abolition. At the fall of the Gladstone Cabinet in 1874, he was President of the Poor Law (Local Government) Board. “It was the first time an ex-Minister, a distinguished leader of one of the great political parties, had appeared on an Abolitionist platform. . . . Mr. Stansfeld brought the cause not only his name, but deep convictions, indomitable courage, and great eloquence,” says Mrs. Butler. “He was a born forlorn-hope leader. . . . Love of justice and liberty . . . was in his bones. He was an international man in the best sense. . . .”² Mr. Stansfeld made an address

¹ *Josephine Butler : An Autobiographical Memoir.*

² Obituary notice, *Stormbell*, March 1898.

of extraordinary power at Bristol in 1874, in which he pledged himself "never to desist from this sacred agitation until these degrading laws are blotted out from the statute book for ever." He was, says Mrs. Butler, "pretty well baited and persecuted in the newspapers." It was generally understood that Mr. Stansfeld risked his whole career in his advocacy of Abolition.

The Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, in 1874, joined the Abolitionists, taking the chair at a great Abolitionist meeting at Birmingham during his Mayoralty. Mr. Gladstone voted in favour of the second reading of Sir Harcourt Johnstone's Repeal Bill in 1875. Mr. Samuel Morley, and many other men of distinction in the literary, legal, and business worlds, joined the City of London Committee for Repeal in 1877, together with leaders of the Established, Presbyterian, Independent, and Methodist Churches. The formation of this City Committee was quickly followed by the adhesion of the three members for the City. "Within the House," Mr. Benjamin Scott notes, "whenever the second reading of the Repeal Bill was moved," i.e. in 1875-6-7-8, "the tone of the House was distinctly higher "

although on each occasion the motion was defeated.

In 1875 Dr. Birkbeck Nevins founded the National Medical Association for Repeal, and became editor of *The Medical Inquirer*, a periodical started in consequence of the refusal of the weekly medical press to admit articles against the Acts, or to discuss the controversy with impartiality. His investigations were of the highest value to Repeal, being made with great care, and often involving the examination of great masses of statistics. The result of his untiring labours was that when the International Medical Association met in London in 1881, *for the first time no attempt was made to move a resolution in favour of the Acts.*

Hundreds of meetings were held all over the country, at many of which Mrs. Butler spoke. Over six hundred towns had committees and correspondents working for Repeal.

A wave of indignation against the system of Regulation passed over England in 1875, owing to the suicide of a Mrs. Percy, a perfectly blameless woman, driven to despair by the persecutions of the Morals Police at Aldershot. Her story exactly illustrates the

defencelessness of all women where such a system exists. Mrs. Butler took Mrs. Percy's daughter into her own house, while the other children were cared for by the Ladies' National Association.

In April 1876 the International Federation entrusted the Rev. J. P. Gledstone and Mr. Henry J. Wilson with a mission to the United States. Mr. Gledstone wrote afterwards to Mrs. Butler : " It was a cold stormy Thursday in 1876 when you persisted in accompanying us to the river, to see us on board the *Adriatic*. The anti-Regulation struggle has seen some uncommon things ; I think so now, as I recall your slender form seeking shelter from the keen wind that swept through the tug that conveyed us—two strong men sent out on their mission, and cheered to it by one woman." ¹ Naturally, the British Abolitionists turned in America to the leaders of the Anti-Slavery party, and from William Lloyd Garrison, in particular, they had generous help. It was found that attempts had been made in many places to establish some form or other of Regulation, of which the friends of purity had been in ignorance. The leading

¹ *Personal Reminiscences.*

Americans made common cause against legalised vice with the English and Continental Abolitionists ; a branch of the International Federation was formed, and a propagandist journal, *The Philanthropist*, became the organ of the New York Committee for Prevention.

Thus, in six years, Mrs. Butler's work had spread to two continents. She says : " If we were permitted to render any service to the great Republic, it was more than repaid by the priceless work of Mrs. Andrews and Dr. Kate Bushnell on behalf of India " (in 1892).¹

¹ See Appendix, India (III) and America (IV).

CHAPTER XIV

PARIS COMMISSION—GENEVA CONGRESS

PUBLIC opinion had been roused by Mrs. Butler's mission to France in 1876. In the late autumn of that year a press campaign sprang up in France, owing to the flagrant brutalities of the Morals Police. No less than seventeen newspapers attacked Regulation. The Paris Municipal Council (urged on, no doubt, by M. Yves Guyot and M. Lacroix, staunch Abolitionists) perceived, as our own Macclesfield Town Council had done in 1871, that the system of State Regulation was a standing menace to local self-government, and appointed a Commission of Inquiry in 1877. Mrs. Butler, Mr. Stansfeld, and Prof. Stuart were invited to give evidence from England, M. Nathan from Italy, M. Humbert and M. Sautter de Blonay from Switzerland, and M. Nicolet from Belgium. Mrs. Butler remarks, "It was a pleasure to me to appear as a witness here, contrasting strongly with the ordeal in 1871, before the Royal Commission.

. . . It was rather a severe exercise of brain and memory to meet and satisfy the questions of a company of quick-witted logical Frenchmen . . . which, however, left one feeling stronger and happier because of the sincerity of motive which one felt animated the questioners.”¹ Several important meetings were arranged for the Abolitionists, by M. Yves Guyot, M. Lacroix, M. Gustave Monod, and M. de Pressensé. “Blue blouses” and working women thronged the meetings, and as in England so often before, Mrs. Butler says the excitement was so great on the point of class-legislation that the speakers hardly dared to say all they thought about it. Mrs. Butler was deeply moved by a speech from a working woman, Mlle. Raoult, and another by a workman, Adhémar le Clerc, dramatic and terrible, on the vengeance which must one day fall on society for its ruined women: “*La femme déchue, la femme déchue !*”

M. Yves Guyot was prosecuted for his part in exposing the Morals Police (and later, imprisoned), and Mrs. Butler describes²—with an irony heightened by her own knowledge of the man—how Lecour,

¹ *Personal Reminiscences.*

² *Ibid.*

Prefect of the Morals Police, "three times, passionately, and with tears," pleaded his honour and the purity of his motives, during the trial of Yves Guyot! At this time Mrs. Butler drew half a dozen pictures of the varied types among the "waifs and strays who always follow us, the outcasts, the diamonds hidden in the dust"; pictures which reveal herself, her heart drawn out by their pitiful recitals, and the sweet and sudden sense of companionship in a great cause which she gave these poor "odds and ends of humanity."

In 1875, the first annual Conference of the International Federation for the Abolition of the State Regulation of Vice had been held in London, and attended by many distinguished men and women from the United Kingdom and the Continent, pre-eminent among them was M. de Pressensé, the great French scholar and divine, whose speech on this occasion Mrs. Butler describes as one of the most remarkable she ever heard. Long quotations from it are given in her *Reminiscences*.

But the full strength of the International movement was not revealed until the Congress of Geneva in 1877, attended by repre-

sentatives of the Federation from fifteen nations, including America, Belgium, Denmark, Great Britain, Holland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Russia, and Spain, besides a numerous and interested public.¹

It is interesting to note that during the preparations for this Congress, an attempt was made in Switzerland to exclude women from certain sections, and Mrs. Butler's opinion was asked for. Her letter to the ladies of Switzerland shows the firm stand of the pioneer woman. She says: "We have laboured for all these years in the cause of womanhood, and in doing so have learned the absolute necessity of the co-operation and the advice of women; and here there are women themselves, who, bowing to the authority of certain men, ask us to bid them to stand apart! . . . It is utterly useless for you to ask Mr. Stansfeld to promote such an act of exclusion. He will not do it. You might as well ask him to strike you. . . . I think you hardly know what our best Englishmen are. They will be true to women now, even in spite of those women themselves. . . . Did

¹ At this period an International Conference on any subject was very rare, almost unheard of.

our Lord ever bow down to public opinion? Would this Crusade ever have begun at all if some English women had not openly defied public opinion? Believe me . . . how easy and useful it is for men and women to work and consult together.”¹

The proceedings of the Congress were divided under five sections: Hygiene, Morality, Social Economy, Preventive and Reformatory Work, Legislation. International Committees had been at work for months previously, studying and discussing subjects to be brought before the Congress. “Rarely,” says Mrs. Butler, “has there been recorded such a unanimous expression of international opinion from representatives of so many different countries . . . founded on investigations so extensive and so conscientious.” “We always anticipated that when the final resolutions came to be voted upon, there would be the real war, and so it was.” At the end, the resolutions all came out satisfactorily to Mrs. Butler, but on one occasion she was driven to take characteristic, but exceedingly drastic, action. The great audience, exhausted with its week’s labours, and hungry, had reached

¹ *Personal Reminiscences*, Chap. VIII.

the limit of its endurance at one o'clock. "A sort of stampede seized some of the German and Swiss members, and they made for the door. Half the meeting would have gone out, and so damaged the worth of the voting. So I ventured to shut the door and set my back against it, declaring that no one should have any food till he had voted! This half startled, half amused, the assembly, and they all sat down again obediently." The voting on the Hygiene section took place that night. "We all . . . sat crowded together, amidst a scene of intense interest, till midnight. Our ladies . . . had been up so early and worked so hard that by 11 p.m. this is the scene which one of my sons described as having observed: 'A long row of ladies *all sound asleep*.' But they had appointed a watcher, Mrs. Bright Lucas, who sat at the end of the row, whom they had charged to keep awake and to give them the signal whenever voting began. . . . Mrs. Lucas was wide awake, with eyes shining like live coals! . . . We had prayed that God would direct this meeting, and it was wonderful to see how the truth prevailed."¹ The

¹ *Josephine Butler*, Chap. X.

resolutions passed were sent to every Government and Municipal Council throughout Europe, and telegraphed to the English Press.

A great extension of Abolitionist work followed upon the Geneva Congress. *Les Actes du Congrès de Genève* was published, furnishing to all inquirers "the weighty utterances of philosophers, statesmen, jurists, women of experience in social work, and leaders among the working-classes, from many countries of the world." "The conspiracy of silence," said Mrs. Butler, "has done us this service—it has forced us to create . . . a literature of our own." Special Abolitionist organs were founded in Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, France, and Italy, besides the more solid works which began to appear in favour of the cause. The opponents of Abolition, unable to accept, as Mrs. Butler says, "the mere expression of a woman's revolted feelings," had not long to wait for the scientific arguments and close reasoning which they professed to desire.

Mrs. Butler, in the following year, 1878, visited Torre Pellice, in North Italy, the cradle of the Waldensian Church; in 1879 Ban de la Roche, in Alsace; Colmar and

Mulhausen ; and she attended the Federation Conference at Liége. " Our principles were gradually extended, by the force of their own vitality, throughout the world."

Mrs. Butler's feelings on the result of the Geneva Congress were of grave triumph. She writes : " The year in which the Congress took place, on a question involving neither territorial aggrandisement, dynastic ambition, nor commercial development, but something higher and greater than these—national morality—was a year destined to remain memorable in the history, not merely of our movement, but of the world. . . . The first timid, imperfect recognition by mankind of a portion of the heavenly law decreed the extinction of the slavery of colour ; a fuller, higher comprehension of its divine justice has decreed the extinction of the slavery of sex " (*Shield*, 1877).

CHAPTER XV

THE WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC

SIDE by side with the demand for Repeal, an agitation was springing up for the amendment of the Criminal Law, with special reference to the protection of young girls and children. Two members of the City of London Committee for Repeal, Alfred Dyer and George Gillett, determined to investigate in person the alleged traffic in young girls between Great Britain and Belgium. "It may be imagined," said Mrs. Butler, "what these men had to suffer for their boldness in entering personally the Belgian prison-houses of shame. . . . They have not only risked their lives . . . but bore to be traduced, ridiculed and slandered." By 1880 they had complete evidence to prove the existence of the White Slave Traffic, and appeared before the Select Committee of the House of Commons to Inquire into the Operation of the C. D. Acts (1879-1882). But the House, nevertheless, still refused to pass the Criminal Law

Amendment Act. Mrs. Butler and others finally approached Mr. Stead, editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and asked him to expose the facts, which he courageously did, rousing the whole country, with the result that the Criminal Law Amendment Bill became law in 1885.¹ (It raised the age of consent from twelve to sixteen, strengthened the laws against procuration, and dealt with sexual offences involving legislation with other countries.)

In May 1880 Mrs. Butler boldly published a statement, which was reproduced in the French, Italian, and Belgian press, making definite charges of gross ill-treatment of young girls in Brussels, on sworn evidence, and stating that "in certain of the infamous houses of Brussels there are immured little children, English girls of from ten to fourteen years of age . . . stolen, kidnapped, betrayed, and carried off from English country villages and sold to these human shambles. Their presence is secretly known only to the wealthy men who are able to pay large sums

¹ It is important to note that though this Bill was *passed* owing to popular agitation, there was nothing hurried or "panicky" about its *drafting*.

for the sacrifice of these innocents." Many of Mrs. Butler's friends were aghast at her audacity ; the London and Brussels police were indignant. M. Humbert, however, wrote to her: "In the face of all, advance courageously, even into the jaws of the dragon. . . . It was inevitable that this phase in our history should arrive."

She wrote : " Sometimes I feel like Dante, who fell prone, ' as one dead,' on witnessing inexpressible human woe. Alas for the thousands gone, dead, murdered, who found no deliverer ! " And again : " At night sometimes I am impelled to get up, in spite of the cold, to arouse myself, to kneel and pray." To her sister she wrote : " Fires are breaking out with lurid light on all sides. We have scarcely taken breath after hearing of one tragedy before the post brings us tidings of another. It is well that it is so. For long years the slaughter of the innocents has been going on. We knew it not . . . Now we know, and before God we are responsible for that knowledge." ¹

The Butlers sheltered some of the poor refugees who escaped. Of one girl, whose

¹ *Personal Reminiscences.*

back was found covered with livid marks from unhealed stripes, Mrs. Butler said : " We seemed to stand before a victim of some cruel overseer of slaves in the cotton plantations. . . . Yet we continue to ban these victims, to treat them as a class, to make exceptional rules and laws for them. In our various police codes we call them all by the ugly name of Prostitute. . . . The Judgment Day will reveal some astonishing things."

The Belgian Public Prosecutor challenged her to prove a single case of the kind referred to, and required her, under the Extradition Act, to make a deposition on oath before a magistrate. This she accordingly did in Liverpool, before Mr. Stamford Raffles, and the deposition was forwarded to Brussels. " From that day forward there were no more attempts to deny the statements I had made."

But the matter did not end there. A Belgian, editor of *The National*, begged her for a copy of her deposition, as he was summoned to give evidence before a Belgian Commission then sitting. Mrs. Butler sent it to him, for his private use, and to her consternation he read the whole before the Commission, and published it entire in his

paper, with all the names ! She was greatly troubled : " when I suddenly recollected that . . . I had taken upon me to make a special request to God for light to fall upon the dark places of the earth. . . . Then I thought . . . O fools, and slow of heart to believe. . . . Here is the very thing I had asked for. . . . I bow my head in thankfulness." ¹

Events followed each other rapidly in Belgium. Parliament took up the matter, and, in the end, the chiefs of the Morals Police were dismissed from office, a number of procurers and slanderers were condemned to prison and various terms of penal servitude, while various official personages " found that the state of their health required them to visit the South of France." ²

In England the National Vigilance Association was formed (with Mrs. Butler and many Abolitionists among its original members), for the protection of the young. This eventually led to the International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. But, as Mrs. Butler pointed out, in countries

¹ *Josephine Butler : An Autobiographical Memoir.*

² Brussels was not, however, *permanently* cleansed. It remained, right up to 1914, one of the great strongholds of Regulation.

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where the State licenses immoral houses, how can the police honestly prevent the traffic on which such houses largely depend ? Regulation and White Slave Traffic are inextricably involved.

CHAPTER XVI

REPEAL

SPEAKING in 1880, Mrs. Butler quoted the saying of the Spartan General Brasidas, as he surveyed the ranks of his enemies: "I see by the shaking of their spears that the rascals are preparing to run." Approaching victory was heralded, not so much by definite results, as by the attitude and manœuvres of the Regulationists. They were "preparing to run" before the gathering strength of public opinion. In 1881 the International Medical Congress, held in London, did not even attempt a resolution in favour of Regulation. On the Select Committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the operation of the Acts (appointed in 1879, re-elected after the Dissolution in 1880) were some of the staunchest friends and leaders of Abolition. Concessions and compromises and contradictory reports were being offered from the side of Regulation from many quarters, at home and abroad.

Meanwhile the intellectual battle was being waged with an almost incredible intensity ; " by solid argument, by repeated assertion of principles, by the unwearying pursuit of the falsehoods and fallacies to which a retiring cause always betakes itself." The succession of conferences, debates, mass meetings, and stormy election contests which took place is beyond enumeration here. As the year of Repeal drew near, adherents came in on all sides. Mrs. Butler's stand had been taken in sheer faith on the ground " that what is morally wrong cannot be hygienically right " ; and scientific men here and on the Continent were everywhere rising up with facts and statistics in support of this axiom. " The great forces which move mankind " were getting into touch with each other and furnishing mutual support. She was being enabled to show " God's one, His constant purpose towards His world."

The dissolution of Parliament took place in 1880, and the Liberals were returned to power. In 1883 the National Liberal Federation adopted Repeal as a party measure, and in April of this year, Mr. Stansfeld moved in the House of Commons " that this House

disapproves of the compulsory examination of women " (the keystone of the system) " under the C. D. Acts." This was carried after an exciting division, the Acts were suspended, and the Morals Police withdrawn. But Repeal was not actually carried till April 1886, after the General Election of 1885. The Bill received the Royal Assent on April 16, 1886.

Mrs. Butler wrote to her sister, Mme. Meuricoffre, in April 1883: " It was a very solemn time. All day long groups had met for prayer—in the houses of M.P.s, in churches, in halls, where the poorest people came. Meetings were being held all over the kingdom, and telegraphic messages of sympathy came to us continually from Scotland and Ireland, France, Switzerland, and Italy. There was something in the air like the approach of victory. As men and women prayed they suddenly burst forth into praise, thanking God for the answer as if it had already been granted. It was a long debate. The tone of the speeches was remarkably purified—with one exception. Many of us ladies sat through the whole evening till after midnight; then came the division. Mr. Gerard, the steward of the Ladies' Gallery, crept quietly in, and

whispered to me: 'I think you are going to win.' . . . Never can I forget the expression on the faces of our M.P.s in the House when they all streamed back from the Division Lobby. The interval during their absence had seemed very long, and we could hear each other's breathing, so deep was the silence. We did not require to wait to hear the announcement . . . the faces of our friends told the tale . . . Mr. Fowler's face was beaming with joy and a kind of humble triumph. I thought of the words, 'Say unto Jerusalem that her warfare is accomplished.' . . . When the figures were given out a long-continued cheer arose, which sounded like a psalm of praise. Then we ran quickly down and met a number of our friends. . . . It was half-past one . . . and the stars were shining in the clear sky. I felt at that silent hour . . . in the spirit of the psalmist who said, 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like unto them that dream.' It almost seemed like a dream."¹

Describing one of the women's meetings held on that memorable night, Mrs. Butler said: "It was a sight I shall never forget . . .

¹ *Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir.*

the poorest, most ragged and miserable women from the slums of Westminster on their knees before the God of Hosts . . . pouring out the burden of their sad hearts. He alone knew what that burden was. There were women who had lost their daughters, there were sad-hearted women, and side by side with these poor souls there were ladies of high rank . . . kneeling and weeping. I thank God for this wonderful and beautiful solidarity of these women . . . before God.”¹

“The object for which I and hundreds and thousands of other men and women in this country had determined to make every necessary sacrifice, for any number of years,” said Mr. Stansfeld in his speech during the debate, “was not merely the repealing of the Acts, but something far deeper, far higher, far more momentous than that. It was the arousing and the awakening of the popular mind to the dangers and the degradations and the crimes of the growing sexual vice of this country.”

¹ *Josephine Butler : An Autobiographical Memoir.*



JOSEPHINE BUTLER
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ELLIOTT AND FRY

CHAPTER XVII

THE CLOSING YEARS

IN 1886 Canon Butler became seriously ill, and his wife made up her mind "never again to be absent from him for more than a few hours . . . during our united lives. I refused all invitations to attend meetings . . . My choice was deliberate . . . I have never had cause to regret it." Her free time was devoted to literature, and much correspondence connected with the Federation. In 1890 Canon Butler died. In his wife's touching words, her "earthly paradise faded, and its best earthly companionship was withdrawn." Yet, in spite of her deep personal griefs, she continued to labour for the cause which had been as dear to her husband as to herself.

In 1893 Mrs. Butler was profoundly stirred on behalf of British India, which was still under Regulation, and she took a deep interest in the work of Mrs. Andrews and Dr. Kate Bushnell, who went out to India in 1892 on behalf of the International Abolitionist

Federation, in order to make personal investigations and bring home reports.

In 1896 Mrs. Butler went to Geneva. It was an occasion of great importance. For the first time a popular vote was to be taken for or against legalised vice. Members of the Federation had been working for weeks to influence the people. The result was a crushing defeat. Mrs. Butler said: "The people were misled by the Government, so that this cannot quite truly be said to be the verdict of the people . . . *I am glad* . . . that the gates of this inferno were thrown open, and that the result of a hundred years of Government organised and protected vice have been revealed." The leading Abolitionists had been invited to hear the result of the poll at the house of M. Favre, a kind of fortress of stone, where they would escape from the vengeance of the brothel keepers in the event of victory. . . . "We began to feel and hear from our fortress the demoniacal orgies of the night. . . . They had organised processions . . . with red lamps. They marched through the whole city, a mass of devilry and obscenity . . . rushed into the church and held a sort of service to the devil . . . 'conse-

crated' their red lamps . . . went on to all the other churches and filled the air in front of each with their blasphemies. . . . It was an open and impudent saturnalia."¹

But as she looked at the group of Abolitionists around her: "As I looked at their good faces . . . I felt more encouraged than I have ever yet been in Geneva. These are the men who make *corps d'élite*, who lead forlorn hopes. . . . Slowly a spirit of resolution . . . took the place of the first feeling of dismay."² Mrs. Butler was greatly encouraged by the support she received from many of the University students, and from thirty-three of the leading doctors of the city.

During her last years Mrs. Butler was in failing health and lived in great retirement, only seeing her oldest friends and cared for by old and devoted servants. She died on December 30, 1906, in her little house at Wooler, in Northumberland, at the age of nearly eighty, and her body lies in Kirknewton Churchyard, eight miles from Coldstream, on the English side of the Border. In her old age she wrote: "Long ago I asked

¹ *Josephine Butler*, Chap. XV.

² *Stormbell*, March 25, 1896.

a gift of God—companionship with Christ. Shall I murmur because, having granted my request, He grants it not in the way that I expected? I thought of Mary, sitting at His feet, hearing His word calmly, happy and wise; but that is not the companionship He grants me to-day. It is the companionship with Him of the penitent malefactor nailed to a neighbouring cross. I cannot grasp His hand, nor sit at His feet, nor lean on His breast, as the beloved disciple did, for I am bound hand and foot, stretched on my cross, till every nerve and muscle strains and aches. I can only turn my head to that side where the Lord hangs, in pain also, so near that I can hear His breathing, His sighs, the beating of His heart, but separated by the Cross. The cross which brings me so near to Him is the hindrance to a still nearer approach. . . . In the morning of life I chose for myself—I chose the beautiful and good things set before me, and now in the evening, when the shadows are closing round, He chooses for me. When my earthly paradise faded, and its best human companionship was withdrawn . . . then my Lord remembered my first request—for companionship with Him . . . to share His soli-

tude, to know the sweet and awful companionship of suffering, of darkness, of the vision of a whole world's sin. . . . I thank Thee, O God ! ”¹

In her last hours, she said to those who surrounded her : “ Don't be unhappy. *Perhaps I shall be able to help you more there than here !* ” Mme. Avril de Ste. Croix, the great French Abolitionist leader, speaking in London in 1919, spoke truly when she said : “ *Her name is a banner in itself.* ”

¹ Stormbell.

CHAPTER XVIII

SAINT AND MYSTIC

THAT we stone our prophets and then build altars to them is an old story ; as old as the fact that, while one-half of our nature recoils, the other half turns, with unutterable contentment, towards glimpses of the spirit. Remembering the old " conspiracy of silence " in the Press, broken now and then by orgies of stone-throwing, it is interesting to note how both at home and abroad the Press made haste on her death to build its altar to Mrs. Butler's memory. *The Daily Chronicle*, in particular, had an article headed, " A Modern Saint." Her own " rare and lovely humility " would have been inexpressibly shocked by such a suggestion, but now that we see her face no more, we may openly admit her sainthood. " By her own life she illustrated the story of the saints of an older world," says the writer of this article, and those who desire a deeper insight into her mind and character, should read her *Life of St.*

Catherine of Siena, in which she unconsciously reveals herself and draws upon her own spiritual experience.

Her strength lay in the mystic sense, familiar to the saints of all ages, of the presence of Christ. Human love was infinitely precious to her ; she was always rich in that, and in all that life can give ; yet every day for hours she was drawn away into this invisible Companionship. She would pin a bit of paper on her door, with " Please don't knock " on it, " and if interrupted," says Mlle. Humbert,¹ " would burst out joyfully : ' Oh, I have had such a happy hour with Jesus ! He has spoken to me.' " Over and over again in her records and letters come these words : " He says to me now " ; " God said to me." Her sense of a living presence, of a heavenly voice speaking in definite language, was never stronger than in moments of bodily danger, of difficulty, and personal anxiety, or at some crisis in the Abolitionist movement. " As I prayed to Him in my heart, these words came pouring into my soul," is a saying familiar to all who knew her inner life.

¹ Address given at the Thirty-fourth Annual Meeting of the Friends' Abolitionist Association.

Josephine Butler shared with all the saints that soul-shaking experience of Calvary: "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" To lose the sense of God was her spiritual nightmare, and it beset her from girlhood. Often the Spirit drove her into the wilderness, "where there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded." For a whole year in early girlhood: "for hours and days and weeks . . . I sought the answer to my soul's trouble, and the solution of its dark questionings. . . . I dreaded Him; I fled from Him." By a mysterious intuition, not unknown to adolescence, she "saw in a vision, before I had seen any of them with my bodily eyes, some of the saddest miseries of earth—the injustices, the inequalities, the cruelties, practised by man on man, by man on woman."¹ The horrors of the slave trade, she says, "broke my young heart." "The great questioning went up: 'God, Who art Thou? Where art Thou? Why is it thus with the creatures of Thy Hand?'" For ever after, she bore in her heart the stigmata of the world's pain and sin.

Not only in early life, but later, the conflict

¹ *Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir.*

was resumed, when she had to endure the anguish of the first plunge into full realisation of the villainy there is in the world. The thought of its atrocity killed charity and hindered her prayers. "A great cloud gathered over me. Anger, fear, and dismay filled my heart. I could see no God, or such as I could see appeared to me an immoral God. Sin seemed to me the law of the world, and Satan its master. I staggered on the verge of madness and blasphemy. I asked, 'Does God not care? . . . Hath God not seen?' These thoughts stirred up the rebel in me. . . . I could not love God. . . . Then came a deep and heavy sorrow" (probably the death of her little daughter) . . . "gathered up into one great cry. I asked of the Lord one thing: that He would take of His own heart and show it to me; that He would reveal to me His one, His constant attitude towards this lost world."¹ The sense of Francis Thompson's words,

"All that I took from thee, I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou mightst seek it in My Arms,"

came finally home to her. The long wrestling

¹ *The Hour before the Dawn: An Appeal to Men.*

with God was done. She had found "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. Looking my Liberator in the face. . . . I have taken my place—Oh! with what infinite contentment—by the side of 'the woman in the city which was a sinner.'" In a letter to Miss Forsaith, she wrote: "He says to me now, 'This woman (Josephine) hath not ceased to kiss My feet,' *and I never will cease.*"

In Frederic Myers' *Fragments of an Inner Life*, he wrote: "Christianity came to me in a potent way—through the agency of Josephine Butler. She introduced me to Christianity, so to say, by an inner door; not to its encumbering forms and dogmas, but to its heart of fire." He dedicated his *St. Paul* to her, with the words: "To whom I owe my very soul."¹

¹ *Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir.*

CHAPTER XIX

THE OUTCAST

"The moral achievement of the individual may be largely valued by his readiness to sacrifice himself for others, but the moral strength of a society is shown by its reluctance to sacrifice even its least worthy members."—*Immortality*, Streeter, p. 85, 1918 edition.

"FOR me," William II of Hohenzollern is reported to have said, "humanity ends at the Vosges." For the Regulationists it ended at the outcast woman. Central to the system lies the theory—convenient to the profligate—that although prostitution is a necessity, the prostitute herself is a being so dehumanised that it is impossible to degrade her further. In the clear but brutal phraseology of a fashionable mid-Victorian writer, she "should be treated as foul sewers are treated, as physical facts, and not as moral agents."

More discreetly veiled, this idea is still current to-day. "What does it matter how such women are treated?" is a comment often heard from Christian persons who would be dismayed to learn that, by these words, they are allying themselves with the causes that make for immorality, and with the attitude of mind which made the State Regulation of Vice possible.

To Mrs. Butler this idea was the toxic spot in the social body. She exposed it continually. "Among those I have known, not under the Acts, I have never met with one so hardened that I could not entertain hope for her." Indestructibly, in her view, the outcast was "as dear to God as we are." She took her stand on the sound law as well as sound religion of De Lolme's axiom: "That the cause of the individual is the cause of all, and that to attack the lowest of the people is to attack all the people." She quotes Chatham's great dictum at the trial of John Wilkes in 1783: "In his person, though he were the lowest of men, I contend for the safety and security of the best; and God forbid, my Lords, that there should ever be a power in this country of measuring the civil rights of the subject by his moral character." Before this principle "measures of exception" affecting particular classes or groups of persons stand condemned.

Mrs. Butler was equally consistent in her attitude towards all remedial work. For the cure of venereal disease she advocated the principles later laid down by the Royal Commission of 1915 and since put into operation

by Government : Wide facilities for treatment for all classes and both sexes, and no conditions which would deter patients from seeking treatment at the earliest possible moment.

In the matter of the work of "rescue," she was far in advance of her time. In a pamphlet on Rescue Work, she perceived in the Penitentiary, as it then existed, an unsound principle : "The establishment of Penitentiaries for women alone recognizes a false system, and is based on a false sense of public morality. Why should not men who have been immoral, as well as women, be confined to a Penitentiary? . . . The great principle of the unity of the moral law . . . independent of sex, must be recognized. . . . The (London) Rescue Society has undoubtedly done much good, but such associations will probably pass away, and be succeeded by something very different." To segregate women in Penitentiaries, under strict discipline, and a régime of hard work and silence, as a class apart, and to treat them—although with benevolent intention—as beings outside ordinary humanity : this was a system, in Mrs. Butler's eyes, akin to the treatment of the outcast under the C. D. Acts, only possible on the very theory which made

the Acts possible—that she had lost all womanliness and was dehumanised.

Against this deadly assumption Mrs. Butler never ceased to fight. Without minimising the enormity of vice, either in man or woman, she eternally laid stress, not on the befouled condition of the sinner, but on “the diamond in the dust.” Before the Royal Commission of 1871, she said: “I have not found loss of womanly feeling in one, except in garrison towns, (i.e. districts under the Acts), and I am astonished that such a question should be asked me—a woman. . . . They are always open to the sympathy of those gifted by Providence and nature with the art of reaching hearts; to one class of person these women appear like devils; to another they are their true selves. . . . Men, as it is mildly expressed, sow their wild oats. It is exactly the same with women. Yet you never hear anyone say: ‘Have you found any conscience in these men? Are they entirely dehumanised? Have they any spark of manliness or modesty left?’ I have never heard that question asked. . . . If it applies to women, it applies equally to men.” In 1882, before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, she used the same lan-

guage : " The only fallen women . . . who are, I should say, humanly speaking, hopeless, are those subject to these Regulations. There is at the depth of their hardness a certain desperate despondency. Their manner is quite official."

Mrs. Butler continually urged " that *every woman* should charge herself with the work of rescuing some unhappy sister, and of assisting her to find a home and earn an honest livelihood." That the public should leave the care of the outcast to the social worker was as unsatisfactory to her as the tone of mind which relieves itself of civic responsibility by reliance on the police. She would have rejoiced to see the new and freer methods springing up everywhere to-day.¹

Like St. Catherine of Siena, it was her knowledge of the Law of Love that enabled her to work miracles with men and women who were sinners.

These were her methods : " Did I speak to them of their sins ? . . . Never ! What am I—a sinner—that I should presume to tell them they were sinners ? That would have stirred an antagonism in their hearts :

¹ See Appendix X. The Josephine Butler Training Home.

'Perhaps you are not much better than we. . . . If you had been neglected, betrayed, kicked about by society.' " She gives a touching description of a visit to about twenty girls in a disorderly house. She talked to them of all they had missed as wives and mothers. She bid them " take courage. . . . You are women, and a woman is always a beautiful thing. You have been dragged deep in the mire . . . yet I dare prophesy good for you. . . . You may become something even better than a happy wife and mother. . . . You can help to save others. Fractures well healed make us more strong. . . . My beloved ones, I have come to tell you of a happiness in store for you greater than any earthly happiness." She continues : " Among those ' lost women ' I have known better rescuers of other lost women than among the truest Christians ; some, whose ardour and self-sacrifice has amazed us. Their own experience drives them on. . . . They stoop to a depth of self-abnegation which comes near to the highest ideal of saintliness. ' We are poor creatures,' one of them said : ' we have done badly . . . but at least we may be of some use in raking a few . . . out of the mud.' " ¹

¹ *Stormbell*, June 1900.

But her efforts were not confined to women. "It has been imposed on me from time to time to speak with men who have fallen low. . . . 'Is it the very truth,' I have asked, 'that you cannot resist temptation?' And the answer has generally been, 'I could *once* . . . but *now* ——.' Shall we repeat the fatalist doctrine that . . . it must be so, the man cannot recover himself? *No! a thousand times no.* With God all things are possible. . . . We have seen with our eyes His miracles of power and love."¹

The following story, taken from Mrs. Butler's evidence before the Select Committee in 1882, shows the effect she produced on young men and boys.

Accompanied by two men from the Rescue Society and Professor Stuart, she was spending a whole night visiting the brothels of a town under the Acts, but "I would not have anyone enter with me." Of one place, she said: "I saw there the evidence of the degradation of young and old. I am a mother of sons, and my heart was well-nigh broken. . . . There were boys there who may have been eighteen or twenty. . . . I was moved to speak to them, and there in that brothel

¹ *Stormbell*, March 1899.

I gathered them round me, and I spoke to them as a mother of sons . . . lovingly, with sympathy, I asked if they had no better amusement ? . . . They said they did not know of any. I said, ' Who has provided this for you ? ' ' Oh, the soldiers all come here, and these are the Government women.' There were perhaps a couple of hundred sitting round the room. Then these boys began to speak to me themselves ; one burst into tears, and said, leaning his head on my shoulder : ' Oh, madam, you will not go away. You will stay among us and try to do us good.' Another said : ' Here is a young lad ; just joined. Couldn't you get him out of this ? He doesn't know what it means.' "

One incident completely illustrates her attitude. On entering a hospital ward, she met the chaplain, pressing his hands over his ears to shut out a torrent of abuse hurled at him by a woman, " hideous to look at, dying and raging . . . she had been kicked to death by her temporary protector. . . . Though dying, she was hungry, as, indeed, she had been for years, and was tearing like a wild beast at some scraps of meat and bread. . . . An unseen power urged me to go near her. Was

it possible for anyone to love such a creature ? Yes, the Lord loved her . . . it was possible for one who loved Him to love the wretch *He* loved. I do not recollect what I said to her, but it was love that spoke. She gazed at me in astonishment, dropped her torn-up food, and flung it aside. She took my hand, and held it in a death-grip . . . became silent, gentle ; tears welled from her eyes. The poor soul had been full to the brim of revenge and bitterness. But now . . . she heard that she was *loved*, and believed it, and was transformed. I loved her. It was no pretence. At parting, I said, ' I will come again.' She died at midnight, quiet, humble, repeating, ' She will come again.' . . . If I had been asked, Had she any clear perception of her own sinfulness ? I could give no answer. I know not. I only know that love conquered, and that He who inspired the . . . message of His love to the shipwrecked soul knew what He was doing, and does not leave His work incomplete."¹ In truth, the only " exceptional measure " she ever advocated for the outcast was a measure of *exceptional love*. It was always "*love that spoke*."

¹ *Stormbell*, March 1899.

CHAPTER XX

THE "EMOTION OF THE IDEAL"

To anyone who realises the gigantic strength of the powers ranged against Mrs. Butler abroad and at home, in the sixties and seventies of last century, the change of thought summarised in the findings of the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease, which sat from 1913-1916, forms a surprising spectacle. In 1875 the International Medical Congress of Vienna came near to imposing the idea of a system of International Regulation on the whole of Europe. In the interval which has elapsed its ideas have "passed" as far as England and certain other countries are concerned,¹ "to the rubbish-heap of time."

How is it, the student asks, that in one generation so revolutionary a change was possible? It looks as if a fundamental change had taken place in human nature. What is the clue to the victory in England over Regulation in the last century?

¹ For countries which have abandoned Regulation see Appendix VIII.

To an extraordinary degree Mrs. Butler possessed, or was possessed by, a power which, from time immemorial, has been the source of all human progress, the secret of all religions, and the inspiration of all true seers. In terms acceptable to this generation, Benjamin Kidd has defined this power as the "passion for the ideal, which is the passion for perfection, which is the passion for God"—a new and captivating way of stating a very old truth.

Doubtless there were thousands in England in the last century as highly equipped intellectually as Mrs. Butler, but none in whom this great contagious quality of sustained emotion had been so highly developed. John Stuart Mill says that the type of mind from which this quality proceeds is always closely associated with the power of leadership of man, and it is a fact that wherever Mrs. Butler went, leadership was required of her. She was a leader in the movement for women's education; she was instantly acknowledged leader of the crusade against Regulation.

Total apathy had been the only result of the efforts against Regulation of Daniel Cooper and the little group of doctors in the sixties. Mrs. Butler had no weapon these

men did not possess, save one, which has been recognised from all time as illimitably superior to every other quality. Armed with no new weapon but this—the “emotion of the ideal”—Mrs. Butler faced, as she said, “all the powers of earth and hell,” and was victorious. For twenty years she had been tempering and disciplining within her hidden life one overmastering passion: the passion for justice steeped in religion, based on love of God and man. It rendered her, to use Kidd’s language, as all the great leaders of mankind have been rendered, “capable of attaining over long stretches of time, a lofty, permanent, and controlled excitement,” which exercised a profound influence, surcharging the atmosphere of her day. “Rather frail-looking,” as she always was, it was this power which enabled her “to maintain constancy for an ideal over long stretches of time in the face of difficulties and persecutions.”¹

When first the call came, and she said to her husband, “I feel as if I must go out into the streets and cry aloud, or my heart will break,” she was already half conscious of this overwhelming and revolutionary force. Visu-

¹ *Science of Power.*

alising with tragic intensity the degradation of both men and women under the C. D. Acts, she felt within herself the capacity to touch others with the psychic contagion of her own emotion.

"I care little," she wrote to a friend in 1875, "that men accuse me of mere sentiment, and of carrying away my hearers by feeling rather than facts and logic. Even while they are saying this they read my words and are made uncomfortable. They feel that there is a truth of some sort there, and that sentiment itself is a fact and a power when it expresses the deepest intuitions of the soul."¹ And again: "They have had the opportunity for years of looking at the question in its material phases—of appreciating its hygienic results, and of reading numberless books, statistical, medical, and administrative. Now for the first time, they are asked to look at it as a question of human nature, of equal interest to men and women; as a question of the heart, the soul, the affections, and the whole moral being."²

¹ *Personal Reminiscences*, Chap. X.

² *Ibid.* It is interesting here to compare Mrs. Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chap. IV: the Senator suddenly forced to see the Slave Trade "as a question of human nature."

She had not the scientific data we possess to-day against Regulation. She could not in the nature of things have had it. As late as 1875, in the full tide of her Crusade, when hope was lowest, she calmly wrote: "In a year or two we shall have a mass of evidence against this system." That she herself did not possess it left her quite untroubled. She was content to say: "By and by we shall come down on our opponents with the heavy artillery of statistics and facts." Her principles did not depend on what Foerster calls "the variable theories of medical science,"¹ and they are not dependent upon them now. They were based on Christian ethics and moral righteousness, and did not admit of any compromise with evil, however advantageous such a compromise might appear to be. She possessed the strongest of all weapons—a power generated in suffering and silence, steeped daily in the presence of Christ, stored, concentrated and controlled—with which to face parliaments, commissions, world-wide organisations, ridicule and hostile mobs.

The extraordinary strength of her influence is well illustrated by the following story told

¹ *Marriage and the Sex Problem*, p. 111.

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by Miss Forsaith : “ At Plymouth at a public meeting a doctor was lamenting that they could not now as formerly exercise compulsion over the women of that city. His hearers sighed and echoed his desire for a return to the C. D. Acts. The speaker added, ‘ We must wait, for Mrs. Butler is *absolutely invincible!*’ ”

It was this influence which gave her what M. Minod calls “ the mysterious power of touching, persuading, convincing.” She first communicated this contagion, and then organised it in her generation, until the evil she was combating was swept away. More than that, “ she moulded the thoughts of men,” as Professor James Stuart said ; she secured for the incoming generation a new inheritance of thoughts, and beliefs, and ideals, which it has taken up readily. Others, each in his own sphere, supported her cause with medical and statistical science, but it is to the initial driving power of Mrs. Butler’s emotion for the ideal of justice between the sexes, based on love of God and man, that we owe the surprising spectacle of the great change in human thought recorded in the findings of the Royal Commission of 1913-16—a single generation later.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FUTURE

WHAT guidance for the future can we gather from the life of Josephine Butler? We are faced with a difficult situation. On the one hand, a far larger proportion of young men and young women than before 1914 are showing courage, self-sacrifice, and discrimination in their attitude towards the social evil. On the other hand, Flexner's hopeful saying in 1913 "that the single moral standard has never been so strongly advocated as to-day,"¹ is now capable of a most sinister interpretation.

War—which fosters all evil passions, and segregates large masses of men away from family influences—has always had sexual looseness as its inevitable accompaniment. A factor in the present case, which must not be lost sight of, is, that thousands of our young men and women have spent years under war conditions in countries where opportunities

¹ *Prostitution in Europe*, Chap. IV.

for vice are provided by the State. "There were tolerated houses all along the lines on every front," said Mme. Avril de Ste. Croix, and the apparent expectation of the State that men should do evil cannot have been without its effect. Mrs. Butler's saying: "Even a limited knowledge of human nature and history reveals to us most clearly the inevitable connection between offered protection and a general increase of licentiousness" finds its application to-day.

Yet we cannot cast the burden of the moral mischief on other countries. In the House of Lords (April 11, 1918), the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of "absolutely overwhelming evidence" that the home-region was in great part the source. Nervous tension, ignorance, lack of ideals or of religion, all added to the drive of events for both sexes. In far larger proportionate numbers, women have, since 1914, become involved in the strong under-tow of men's age-long promiscuity. For centuries (to quote the words of the Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene) —(*Challenge*, May 9, 1919)—"women have been largely kept moral by the tremendous pressure of public opinion, and the fear of

disgrace. . . . Now they know how to avoid consequences." For their dread of disgrace is exchanged the dread lest, owing to the holocausts of men in the war, their natural sex instincts may never be satisfied in marriage. Many are found to advocate that the "single moral standard" shall be levelled down for women, not levelled up for men. Marriage is lightly regarded. A step has been taken back towards the "ignorant knowledge" of the last century, and again to many the old virtues "look like the face of a dead friend." How is this situation to be met? ¹

Mrs. Butler's story is a standing example of how the "emotion of the ideal" may be transmitted to the adult, even to those already plunged in sin. The work of redemption is, in truth, nothing more than the transmission of an inner vision, and every true instance of it is an instance of the overwhelming, revolutionary power of the "emotion of the ideal." In a letter Mrs. Butler speaks of this work of rescue. She appeals to "the young manhood and womanhood of our day, to the generous heart of youth. . . . It is not only

¹ *Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir*, Chap. XX.

the pure and blameless who are called. Let me tell you something of my own experience. . . . I have seen young men throw themselves into the battle, in order to take a noble revenge against their former selves—making a bridge of their own dead selves for worthier comrades to pass to victory. I beseech you, let *none* of goodwill hold back ! ”

But the chief hope of the future, as always, lies with the child. Kidd¹ presents for us here a line of action, along which we are already groping, by which we may set up an internal standard of conduct that will act as powerfully on both sexes as hitherto the inhibitions of society have acted on the woman alone. He introduces us to a stupendous social power as yet only fitfully brought into action—the overmastering power of the emotion of the ideal transmitted to the child. What Mrs. Butler effected on a large scale, and mainly for the adult, we have each of us the power to effect for the children of our race.

Hitherto we have only thought of safeguarding this child or that. The full force of what might be done by organised action over

¹ *Science of Power.*

a period of years has not yet been completely understood. We are feebly fumbling, not collectively, but in scattered, desultory attempts here and there, to educate our own children in the higher facts of sex. Readers of the Minutes of the recent Royal Commission on Venereal Disease will remember how they teem with suggestions from doctors, teachers and social workers as to the way in which this education may be given. But what percentage of our girls and boys ever receive it? Public opinion is growing, but at present there is no adequate appreciation of the enormous force which might collectively be opposed to the social evil by this means.

We have missed a point which Kidd fortifies by striking illustrations: that facts will not reach a child as an inner vision, or an internal, compelling standard, if they are cold-bloodedly presented as science, or in mere "Thou shalt nots." They must, he says, be presented to the child either by the agency of the collective ideal in a society which has saturated itself with such ideals, or they must be presented to him by those in whom the emotions of the ideal have been generated through experience—stored, con-

centrated, and disciplined.¹ In whom can the ideals of sex be so generated? Assuredly not so well in the most devoted of teachers, as in the thousands and tens of thousands of married lovers, who through their own intimate experience, know what is meant by the "emotion of the ideal," and who understand that in the heart of most perfect freedom between two persons lies the core of Discipline, even of Renunciation.

The chief problem before the human spirit to-day, a problem before which every other pales in significance, is: How can we so organise the emotion of the ideal in the higher matters of sex that our boys and girls may not only (in the words of St. Thomas à Kempis be "made fit to love," but *come prepared to the fields of sacrifice*.

For, after all, what are we asking of youth to-day, when we demand Chastity? The answer is in thousands of cases, Self-sacrifice; what Kidd calls "the vast, tragic, ennobling, immortalising ethic of Renunciation,"—a renunciation for which little or nothing is done

¹ Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe*, Chap. II, says: "Not only knowledge, but knowledge suffused with ethical emotion is requisite."

to prepare them. They are right in saying that such repression is unhealthy. It is unhealthy, when it is on the wrong basis. Disturbance must follow on the forcible damming up of an active principle without outlet. But if, from earliest childhood, through the "emotion of the ideal" youth could be made conscious that there is no such thing as a free-will crucifixion without a resurrection,—if every humblest act of self-control could be shown in its active relation to a *great view of life as a whole*¹—then the sense of negation would disappear. "The impression of a restriction of life would be removed, and the energy in question yoked to higher purposes."² Inhibitions would be set up, sufficient in the hour of supreme temptation, because to break through them would mean the loss of all that makes life worth living.

Kidd says : " It is the nature of the inner vision that it leaves the possessor never satisfied with the world as it is, and that it draws him through every degree of effort to realise his ideal. *Evoked under suitable conditions*

¹ See Appendix VI.

² Foerster, *Marriage and the Sex Problem*, Chap. VIII.

³ Kidd, *Science of Power*, p. 149.

in the mind of the young, it is able to render successive generations of the men on whom it acts fixed of purpose, capable of most surprising labours, and sufficient to otherwise impossible measures of self-subordination and self-sacrifice."

Commercialised vice, "tolerated houses all along the lines on every front," disease, ruined homes, futile legislation, and the degradation of men and women, cry aloud to us in witness of the neglect of the past. "It is well," said Mrs. Butler in the *Stormbell*, "that we should realise that the moral guilt of ignorance needs none the less to be repented of and purged away because it is shared by thousands and because it may chiefly be laid to the charge of generations gone by." Let us cut off the entail of our evil inheritance! It is no easy task—it needs courage, self-training¹ and unremitting care; for the inner vision, as well as a real knowledge of the physical facts, must first be acquired, and then transmitted to the child, so that they reach him unconsciously as part of the *whole revelation* of the divine miracle of human existence. "God gives us a phraseology . . . which

¹ Appendix V.

makes it possible to go to the bottom of these things without offending the chastest ear," said Mrs. Butler. The "emotion of the ideal" already exists in extraordinary intensity in the mind of the normal child. It is there, waiting to be laid hold of, until it is lamentably brushed off by contact with materialism. *We have in each child the very stuff the world needs.* Our task is, actually, by teaching and example, to place the child *permanently* under the influence of an emotion to which it is already acutely sensitive. That is why all teachers say, "Begin early enough." They mean: "Begin before this exquisite stuff has been spoilt."

Better housing, education, wages, laws, and recreation for both sexes will do much. But, as Mrs. Butler said, these are externals, so long as public opinion is not raised: "I beseech you, let *none* of goodwill hold back!"

APPENDIX I

D.O.R.A. REGULATION 40D (ISSUED MARCH 1918)

THE Order stated that " No woman who is suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form shall have sexual intercourse with any member of His Majesty's Forces, or solicit or invite any member of His Majesty's Forces to have sexual intercourse with her.

" If any woman acts in contravention of this Regulation, she shall be guilty of a summary offence against these Regulations.

" A woman charged with an offence under this Regulation shall, if she so requires, be remanded for a period (not less than a week) for the purpose of such medical examination as may be requisite for ascertaining whether she is suffering from such disease as aforesaid." ¹

This was opposed by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene on the ground that :

- (1) It was unequal between the sexes ;
- (2) It created an offence incapable of proof ;
- (3) It reintroduced the compulsory medical examination of women ;
- (4) It encouraged the false idea that vice could be made safe ;

¹ This is quoted in full as an example of a modern return to the principles of the C. D. Acts.

(5) It exposed any woman to malicious denunciation by men of bad character.

The Regulation was withdrawn as unworkable in November 1918.

APPENDIX II

THE Medical Women's Federation issued (December 1919) "*Some Suggestions as to the Duty of the State in the Control of Venereal Disease*," price 3d., obtainable from the Secretary, 9 Philford Street, W.1. This admirable summary exposes the Neo-Regulation which is being promoted in many countries to-day under the guise of hygiene and shows the fundamental unity of many suggested "new" remedies with the old Regulationist principles, e.g. Notification and Compulsory treatment, Penalisation for infecting another, Prophylaxis, including the "packet system" and Early Preventive treatment. The Federation has also submitted a précis to the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider the Criminal Law Amendment Bills of 1920-1, of which Part II is published in *The Shield*, November 1920 (price 1s.), and which should be read by all seriously interested. It clearly demonstrates how, so long as the determining factor in the spread of disease—promiscuous intercourse—remains untouched, such remedies are fallacious and unscientific. They are only attempts to avoid the disease while retaining freedom to practise those habits which spread it.

The one test to apply to all legislation of this nature is the old Abolitionist "touchstone":

(1) Does it put women, or *any woman*, under police control other than that exercised over all people equally ?

(2) Does it make of women, or *any woman*, a special class, liable to special health legislation or special penalties ?

(3) Does it give power to police or medical officers to enforce medical examination of women, or *any woman*, for venereal disease ?

If so, it is now, as in Josephine Butler's days, a form of Regulation, and should be rejected as medically useless, futile from the point of view of public order, and degrading to men, women, and the officials who have to carry it out.

APPENDIX III

INDIA

AFTER the repeal of the C. D. Acts, 1886, in England, the British Committee of the International Abolitionist Federation, turned its attention to India, where the Acts were in full force. In 1888 it made public the infamous Memorandum issued, by the Commander-in-Chief in 1886, containing these words: "In the regimental bazaars it is necessary to have a sufficient number of women, to take care that they are sufficiently attractive, to provide them with proper houses . . ." etc.

The Federation then attacked the whole system in the House of Commons, obtaining an almost unanimous vote demanding repeal. In 1889 the Canton-

ments Act repealed the C. D. Acts in India, but the actual policy did not alter, except in a few places, and Dr. Bushnell and Mrs. Andrews found in 1891-2 that all the worst features of the C. D. Acts were still in operation. Their exposure could not be refuted, and the Cantonment Amendment Act was passed in 1895, but repealed in 1897. In 1918 Mrs. K. Dixon, acting as representative of the Moral and Social Hygiene Association,¹ made personal investigations, travelling up and down India, and discovered almost the same conditions as those described by Dr. Bushnell and Mrs. Andrews. Mrs. Dixon and her husband interviewed the Commander-in-Chief, who, as a result, issued a Memorandum to all Officers Commanding, which, for the time being at least, removed this blot from our administration in India.² It is essential that the British Government should strengthen and make permanent the Cantonment Laws against brothel-keeping and procuration, and administer their laws justly and vigorously, and without distinction or favour.

In Burma, the Straits Settlements, Hongkong, Malta, Gibraltar, and other places within the British Empire, Regulation still exists: women are enslaved; men are demoralised and deluded into fancied immunity; procuration is rife (*Shield*, August 1919).

¹ Or British Branch of the International Abolitionist Federation.

² In order to secure *permanent* abolition the Cantonment Code needs amendment.

APPENDIX IV

AMERICA

SIDE by side with the era of close scientific study which has set in in America, there has sprung up in the U.S. and Canada and elsewhere, an indiscriminate and futile policy known as the "suppression of prostitution" policy, which masquerades as Abolition, and gains the support of moral and religious bodies. It is, in reality, Regulation in a new form. Reports are coming in of panic measures, and of vigorous agitation leading to the arrest, enforced examination, hospital detention, *and, at a later stage*, the trial of all sorts and conditions of girls and women suspected of loose living, or denounced by some other person.¹ In some places men are also being arrested.² This is hailed as "justice," and "equality between the sexes." In the *Storm-bell*, February 1898, Mrs. Butler pointed out that thirty years previously, attempts were made to confuse Abolitionists by this same cry of "Equality." "This sort of thing," she remarked, "is not at all new." It is always preceded by panic statements about a vast prevalence of disease. Women, she adds, have "always firmly rejected such *equality of degradation*, holding in abhorrence Government assault upon the persons of either men or women." In practice, men have always found means of resistance, by physical force or bribery. In the end,

¹ *Shield*, May to August 1919.

² *Eugenics Review*, October 1919.

the result always is that only the women are hunted down, and of these the crafty and the rich escape, and only the poor and the stupid are netted. The hygienic results are *nil*, and the whole indiscriminate blunder is "carried on by a system of hideous police espionage, amidst the wholesale corruption of doctors and officials." Thus does history repeat itself! "It would be well," remarks Mrs. Butler, with a touch of satire: "if a fear of moral impurity could be aroused in any degree comparable with the recurring panics about disease."

We do not wonder that public opinion in America is beginning to arise against this indiscriminate policy. Flexner's opinion (Chap. IV, *Prostitution in Europe*) is valuable here: "The change of opinion from the crime concept to the vice concept of prostitution denotes and accompanies, not less, but greater public concern on the subject. For it betokens a critical study of the problem—a reduction of its vast total into constituent elements, each to be met by its own appropriate procedure. The Societies whose laws indiscriminately denounced all immorality as crime are conspicuous for the futility of most of the steps which they took in dealing with it. *Results have appeared coincidentally with discrimination.*" Frontal attacks on prostitution are valueless, so long as its *causes* are left untouched.

APPENDIX V

SEX EDUCATION

THE National Council for Combating Venereal Disease (Avenue Chambers, Southampton Row, W.C. 1), gives courses of instruction for teachers and parents.

APPENDIX VI

FOERSTER here touches the heart of the problem. To call upon the emotion of the ideal chiefly to strengthen *the individual life* would be to hamper the ideal at every turn. "To build the new world, we need not only children who have the ideal to enable them to live a *pure* life, but also to live a *social* life. In other words, however much you teach children the facts and ideals of sex, you still need to have enthusiasts for the *moral health of the whole community*, who will see to good conditions of life for all."—Dr. Helen Wilson (letter to author).

APPENDIX VII

"THE attitude of law and administration towards disease is very different in 1921 from what it was in 1870. At that time the only legislation about disease (apart from the C. D. Acts) consisted in Acts for compulsory vaccination and for giving certain emergency powers in regard to foreign epidemics like cholera. During the previous two decades great strides had, indeed, been made in public health by improvements in housing, paving, drainage, water

supply, and the like ; local authorities had obtained powers in this direction under numerous public and private Acts of Parliament, and these reforms had been accompanied by a remarkable reduction in the death-rate from typhus, typhoid, scarlet fever, and consumption. But there was no power of compulsion in regard to individuals (with the exceptions already mentioned). Thus the C. D. Acts put venereal disease in an altogether exceptional and privileged position, firstly, by providing for the inspection and treatment of civilians (women only) out of national funds, and secondly, by interfering with the liberty of women (only) who were (or were suspected of being) diseased.

To-day all this is changed. Successive Acts (1876, 1889, 1890, 1907) have been passed in regard to most of the ordinary infections. Much compulsion has been introduced in regard to *things* and *places* ; many new obligations—some, perhaps, of doubtful utility—have been imposed on local authorities, on householders, and on doctors. We have compulsory notification of many diseases, disinfection provided for and enforced, isolation hospitals and sanitary inspectors provided out of public funds. It is noteworthy that throughout this legislation there has been no interference with *personal liberty*, except where that liberty is a proved danger to others,¹ e.g. where the sick person is liable to infect others in street,

¹ I refer here to Acts of Parliament. In their administration the spirit of respect for personal liberty may sometimes be illegally ignored by officials and magistrates.

shop, public conveyance, or in a lodging where proper precautions are not available.

Thus, while the *constitutional and legal* writings of Mrs. Butler and her associates are as sound *in principle* to-day as ever they were, many passages would need considerable modification in form to make them applicable to problems of to-day.

The main argument used at the present time in favour of combating venereal disease by direct legislation was necessarily non-existent in the seventies. That argument may be put as a syllogism, thus :

Compulsory measures, beginning with notification, are essential for combating contagious diseases :

Syphilis and gonorrhœa are contagious diseases.

Therefore compulsory measures, beginning with notification, are essential for combating syphilis and gonorrhœa.

The Report of the Royal Commission (1915) effectively disposes of the minor premise ; it shows that the differences between venereal disease and other contagious diseases are so great that they cannot be dealt with in the same way—at any rate, for the present. The major premise is often accepted as a truism, but a study of sanitary history shows that it is an assumption unsupported by facts.”
(Note by Dr. Helen Wilson.)

APPENDIX VIII

THE POSITION OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES TO-DAY WITH
REGARD TO REGULATION

Norway.—Abolished, 1887 ; free treatment for disease.

Denmark.—Abolished, 1906 ; free treatment for disease.

Holland.—Abandoned in one town after another between 1889 and 1911.

Sweden.—Abolished, 1918.

Italy.—Abolished practically ; brothels registered ; free treatment, 1907.

Belgium.—Up to 1914 a modified system of Regulation. No recent information.

Switzerland.—Regulation exists in Geneva only.

France.—Regulation in full vigour.

Germany.—Regulation in most cities till 1914. No recent information.

Austro-Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, etc. — No reliable information of recent date, but some form of Regulation exists on system of tolerated brothels in Austro-Hungary.

Russia.—Reported that Revolutionists abolished Regulation.

United States.—Abolished most of its segregated vice areas in large towns during the war. See Appendix IV.

Japan.—Has segregated areas ; attempts sanitary Regulation.¹

¹ *The Shield*, March 1920.

APPENDIX IX

TABLE D

BRITISH ARMY

Returns for Venereal Disease¹ per 1,000 per annum among troops in the United Kingdom from 1870 to 1913 are as follows :

Contagious Diseases Acts in force.	1888	.	224.5
1870 . 201.0	1889	.	212.1
1871 . 201.5	1890	.	212.4
1872 . 202.2	1891	.	197.4
1873 . 167.6	1892	.	201.2
1874 . 145.7	1893	.	194.6
1875 . 139.4	1894	.	182.4
1876 . 146.5	1895	.	173.8
1877 . 153.2	1896	.	158.3
1878 . 175.5	1897	.	139.7
1879 . 179.5	1898	.	132.7
1880 . 245.9	1899	.	122.4
1881 . 245.5	1900	.	93.2
1882 . 246.0	1901	.	105.4
	1902	.	122.7
	1903	.	125.0
Contagious Diseases Acts suspended in 1883.	1904	.	107.6
1883 . 260.0	1905	.	90.5
1884 . 270.7	1906	.	81.8
1885 . 275.4	1907	.	72.0
	1908	.	68.0
	1909	.	66.0
Contagious Diseases Acts abolished in 1886.	1910	.	65.0
1886 . 267.1	1911	.	60.5
1887 . 252.9	1912	.	56.4
	1913	.	50.9

(Parliamentary White Paper on Prophylaxis against Venereal Disease, 1919.)

¹ October 1873–November 1879. Soldiers forfeited pay while under treatment. The low rates during this period are probably due to concealment of disease.

Mrs. Butler did not take her stand on hygiene, but on the moral law ; yet the preceding tables are significant of the strength of her position. The decline shown after the repeal of the Acts coincided with a steady improvement in the social condition of the soldiers.

APPENDIX X

OUT of the tremendous need of the day has arisen a great opportunity for women who desire to follow in the steps of Josephine Butler. Until lately no memorial existed of her, but to-day her memory is enshrined in a way which would have been dear to her, in the Josephine Butler Memorial Training House, 15 Prince's Avenue, Liverpool.

Apart from the great work to be done by men in *raising public opinion among men*, all the facts of history and nature point to the conclusion that it is women who must set the standard, and women who must lead the way in the struggle for social purity. Since this involves every phase of human life and knowledge, it follows that women must fit themselves for their great task by the most thorough and concentrated preparation that can be had. Liverpool is exceptionally suited to this purpose. Its University affords the students at the Training House every variety of specialisation in subjects as varied as theology, psychology, moral education, social and

industrial conditions, legal administration, medical and physiological problems, etc., while the local institutions of the city, its clubs, workhouses, venereal disease clinics, wards, and hostels, its police courts, patrol work, maternity and child-welfare work, etc., offer opportunities for a wide range of practical work. Students at the Memorial House will also be trained in individual visiting and after-care, in early and late street-work, and in the clerical work and domestic economy of which a knowledge is often invaluable. Candidates for the Training House Certificates remain at the Centre for the first six months, and are then drafted off to the different Homes for further practical work. The end of their year is spent at the Centre.

The Training House is conducted on Church of England lines, but is open to women of all denominations. It aims at giving guidance to each student in the preparation and strengthening of her spiritual life for the work that lies before her, during the whole period of training. It is intended for women of secondary education, who have already had considerable experience in social and educational work. Women without such experience are strongly recommended to take a year's preliminary training in social work. Missionary students and students from Settlements are welcomed for shorter periods than the allotted year by arrangement. The cost for the year is between £50 and £75. Tests as to qualification for a Certificate include (a) reports from the Warden of the Training House and from the

Heads of Homes where a student has worked ;
and (b) examinations in special subjects. Leaving
Certificates will be countersigned by the President of
the Archbishop's Advisory Board for spiritual and
moral work.

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